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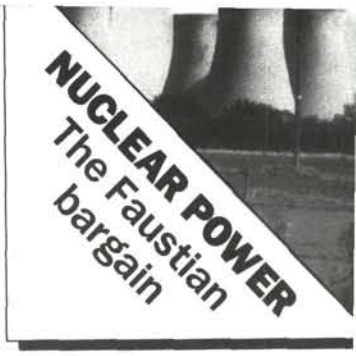


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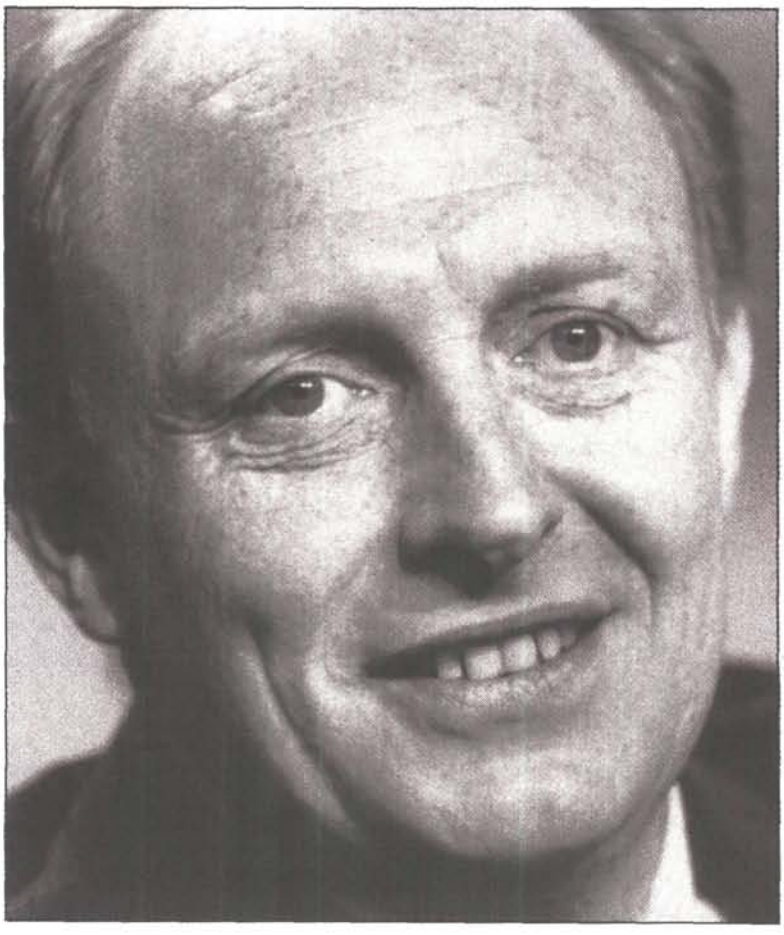
Green grows the Party; the Vatican's sex clamps
Autumn books: South Africa; Edgar on Waugh; fiction; sf . . .



# PARADISE RESUMED

'. . . as fast as resources allow'

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# Healthy Questions.

In an area as controversial as health care, there are bound to be many questions. But when it comes to NHS medicine supply the answers are often assumed. If you want more information about British medicines and their contribution to the nation's health and wealth, contact ABPI at the address below.

**Q. How does the pharmaceutical industry affect the UK economy?**

A. In 1985 UK pharmaceutical exports exceeded imports by over £830 million. Our domestic spending on medicines is only half that of our major competitors like the US, Japan and Germany. If Britain is to be able to afford good welfare services, we must be able to pay for them – pharmaceuticals are an area in which this country is outstandingly successful.

**Q. What contribution to UK employment does the pharmaceutical industry make?**

A. Over 80,000 people are employed directly by the UK pharmaceutical industry. A further 250,000 to 300,000 British jobs owe their existence indirectly to the pharmaceutical industry.

**Q. Why is the number of NHS prescriptions rising?**

A. Between 1979 and 1985 the total number of prescriptions dispensed in the UK rose by only 5%. Factors involved included the 'ageing' of the population, rising unemployment and the shift to community care. For some groups of medicines, such as tranquillisers, the total fell significantly.

**Q. Does the pharmaceutical industry care about 'Third World' health?**

A. Only about 10% of the UK pharmaceutical industry's revenue is derived from the entire Third World. Yet through ABPI, British medicine manufacturers accept their responsibility to aid global health progress. For example, pilot projects to improve medicine distribution are being funded in East Africa and the Maldives.

**Q. Why should all the growth money available to the NHS go to medicine costs?**

A. It does not. Since 1982 the proportion of NHS resources going to pharmaceuticals (costed in manufacturers' prices) has stayed roughly constant. Less than one NHS pound in ten goes on medicines. Some 80% of NHS medicines are prescribed by General Practitioners. DHSS figures show that between 1979 and 1984 overall spending on the family practitioner services went up 10% more than their medicine costs.

**Q. Haven't we already got the medicines we need?**

A. Medicines and vaccines are not the only key to better health. But they have contributed significantly to the control of infections and the relief of disorders like depression, arthritis and heart disease. Unfortunately, however, many illnesses are still incurable, or only partly treatable. Providing research investment continues, many more effective pharmaceuticals will be developed to protect against conditions such as cancers, multiple sclerosis and AIDS.

**Q. Does the pharmaceutical industry spend more on promotion than research?**

A. In Britain the pharmaceutical industry spends, from its NHS income, twice as much on research as it does on promotion/information. If export earnings are added, UK research spending stands at over £500 million, more than three times UK promotional and allied outlays.

**Q. Isn't the pharmaceutical industry excessively profitable?**

A. The UK pharmaceutical industry's profits from the NHS are currently below the average for the companies quoted in the "Financial Times" 500 Index. The UK pharmaceutical industry has consistently invested more in this country than it has made in profit from the NHS.

For further information about medicines and health in Britain, write to Gail Turner at The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry's Health Information Desk, or telephone her on 01-930 3477.

British Medicines and Britain's Health.
The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry.
ABPI, 12 Whitehall, London SW1A 2DY.

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New Statesman

Vol 112 No 2896 26 September 1986

# The best there is

NEIL KINNOCK, whose speech to Labour's conference next Tuesday will be his most important so far, has done a good job over the past three years. The least experienced of party leaders, he has made himself look like a potential Prime Minister. At the head of the most fissiparous party, he has managed to marginalise the ultra left and to silence the doubts of the right, notably on defence. He has rocked with rock stars, bent the ears of general secretaries and made international friendships. He is in the van of the realist faction of his party, talking down expectations which cannot be fulfilled, and talking up trade union members' expectations of ballot-based democracy which cannot be reversed. Yet he is also seen by at least the soft left as a man whose radical instincts will not be dulled by power, even if they think he listens to them too little.

No doubt he has been helped by his colleagues in the shadow cabinet, the Parliamentary Labour Party and the trade unions' leaderships who shared his desperation that Labour might sink to third place and his ambition to see himself in Downing Street. No doubt that 1983 was worst of all for the left in the party, and that Tony Benn's failure to wrest the deputy leadership away from Denis Healey in 1981 was the far left's high watermark.

But still, the effort has been prodigious and the application of will and intelligence tremendously impressive. He has shed, as rapidly as the Shakespearean Prince Hal on becoming Henry V, the devil-may-care antics of the lefty MP from the valleys who approached every issue with an open mouth, leaving a number of fundamentalist Falstaffs grumbling into their sack.

The gap in the record is no fault of his: it is a gap in the record of democratic socialism itself. He, in common with every other leader in that political tradition, has been unable to provide it with a central political dynamic which rides the tide of history. Neither the British Labour Party, nor the French socialists, nor the German social democrats, nor the Italian (Euro) Communists and socialists, nor any of the other left parties have produced, in opposition or in government, a response to the twin assaults of unemployment and neo-liberalism which is both distinctively socialist and clearly coherent as a governing strategy.

In its place, we have a strategy at the centre of which is a pledge to reduce unemployment by one million and to relieve poverty in a country where the inequalities of disposable wealth have remained untouched for the past six years.

Yet behind that the question remains unanswered: what can socialism do for society *now*? Which of its traditions and practices address wealth creation and business efficiency in a period of rapid relative decline? Which of its philosophies addresses a nation whose citizens are more 'privatised', in the sense that they pursue their own choices and ends more vigorously, than at any time since socialism came on to the agenda? How far can the rhetoric *ever* transcend the conference floor?

To pose these rhetorical questions is not to assume that they have no answer. But they have no answer yet, and not all of Kinnock's exercise of his formidable powers has put it there. □

New Statesman

*Cover photo:* Camera Press

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**NEXT WEEK**

**NEW STA**

. . . the *New Statesman* will look different. The magazine has been redesigned throughout and will be printed on a better quality paper. The move to a new printer means we shall also be able to carry run-of-paper 4-colour advertising and editorial colour. Not only will the magazine please the eye, the ink will no longer come off on your hands.

The new look coincides (and you can believe it *is* a coincidence) with special coverage of the Conservative Party as it prepares for its annual conference in unusually grim and divided mood. SARAH BENTON reports



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"A SYMPATHETIC PIECE OF ANTI-NUCLEAR PROPAGANDA ... A PLAY ABOUT THE POWER OF HUMAN LOVE ... TO BUILD A STRONGHOLD AGAINST CHAOS" Times Literary Supplement

"DIGNITY AND WEIGHT ... SHOCKS AND STIRS ONE ... A PLAY THAT AFFIRMS ... THAT CONTINUING LIFE IS MORE TO BE CELEBRATED THAN TRIUMPHANT DEATH" The Guardian

"CLARK'S TRAGIC SUBJECT WHICH HE HANDLES WITH MAGISTERIAL SENSITIVITY IS THE ESSENTIAL WAR-LIKENESS OF THE HUMAN CONDITION ... HIDEOUS INTENSITY ... LEAN, ECONOMICAL AND UNCOMFORTABLY ADULT ... COMBINES A PASSIONATE MORAL ARGUMENT WITH HUGE THEATRICAL APPEAL" Sunday Times

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# Bernard's briefings doomed?

**The 'lobby' system — the formal meetings in which political correspondents are unattributably briefed on behalf of the government or the Prime Minister — may be doomed. This week, Peter Preston, editor of the *Guardian*, has written to Bernard Ingham, the Prime Minister's spokesman, to say that his paper will no longer obey the convention that gives no source for his briefings. From now on, the *Guardian* will make it clear that Ingham's 'guidance' is on Thatcher's behalf — even when (as so often) it is briefing against a Cabinet or other colleague.**

Other papers may follow suit: Preston has already conferred with fellow editors Charlie Wilson (*The Times*) and Max Hastings (*Daily Telegraph*), and found that Hastings shares his views and is likely to follow suit. His move already places Ingham in a quandary: does he refuse to speak to any gathering of lobby journalists which includes the *Guardian*? Or does he give the most anodyne briefings, reserving the juicy stuff, for those who play the game, on the telephone?

The lobby group, presently chaired by Julia Langdon, the *Mirror*'s political editor, has in the past two years succeeded in persuading the opposition leaders to brief on the record, and some have, on occasion, sourced Ingham's briefings. The best of them do not use the briefings as their main source — though much of what they *do* print depends on the kind of conversations which begin 'Don't quote me ...' That's deeply ingrained into British public life: the *Guardian*'s step, taken to pre-empt The *Independent*'s declared intention to ignore lobby rules from its start date on 7 October, may shift it a little for the better. ■

# Delusion and reality

**Over-concentration on the Liberals' split on defence has obscured an even wider gap between the party's self-delusionists and its realists. In the first camp, the Association of Liberal Councillors kicked off with an exercise on how to exploit their supposedly assured balance of power leverage in the next parliament. The Liberal Commission started from the heady assumption that the 'next Alliance government' will transform Britain.**

**But Liberal Party professionals and many MPs privately agree that the parliamentary group is most likely to double to around 40 MPs, with the SDP reaching somewhere between 15 or 20. Such a group might not, in practice, be able to negotiate with even a minority Labour government which might be able to survive on the toleration of the Scottish and Welsh nationalists and (yes) even the Ulster MPs — leaving the Alliance, and proportional representation, firmly on the sidelines.** ■

# Kilroy sulks

*Robert Kilroy Silk's political diary, 'Hard Labour', now running in* The Times, *is not an attractive document. The MP comes across as more than a little vain, while his permission to his publishers (Chatto and Windus) to aim the book at the pre-Labour Party conference period and to have it serialised in* The Times *shows a lack of regard for the party he professes to wish to save, a good deal of regard for fame and pocket.*

*But its real ugliness is in what it describes. There is no reason to disbelieve the broad outlines of his charge: that Militant, which had targeted him for deselection and which still has a dominant influence on his Knowsley North (Merseyside) seat, acted and still acts in a manner which intimidates its opponents, flouts both the written and unwritten rules of the Labour Party and scorns any practice which would conform to the decencies of democratic politics. Labour's leadership hardly has to be convinced of this case any longer: indeed, all but those on the hardest of lefts have accepted the need for Militant's excision.*

*But Knowsley North remains, with much of Merseyside, a sore. Les Huckfield, Euro MP for Merseyside East and now the hardest of lefts, is the favourite — his election is so unwelcome to the party leadership that it is now actively examining how he can be blocked. There seems no way: the national executive could intervene if a Euro MP challenges a Westminster MP who does not want to stand down in a reselection battle, but Knowsley North is wide open. Besides, the next most likely candidate for the seat, Knowsley council leader Jim Lloyd, is also fishing for Militant backing. The by-election, probably in November, will face Labour's leaders with yet another dilemma on how to, or how not to, express support.* ■



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# PARADISE RESUMED

## ('. . . as fast as resources allow')

*'It has been explained to us that the previous Labour government were blown off-course. We could attribute that to inexperienced navigation, but if the present Labour government are blown off-course it will not be inexperienced navigation but downright piracy. If that happens we will not be forgiven.' — Neil Kinnock, July 1975.*

Camera Press

**If Labour wins the election — perhaps only nine months away — it will have the most radical programme of any new administration since the war, despite striving to undersell it. But the shock of nearly coming third in the 1983 election has induced Labour's leaders to guarantee little, while hoping nevertheless to usher in paradise 'as a longer-term goal'. JOHN RENTOUL sets off to explore what will happen when Labour collides with the real world**

THE MAIN PLANKS of Labour's election campaign are in place, but have they been nailed down? Is Labour ready for government? Ready for the gales of American anger or the typhoon of the foreign exchanges?

A Kinnock government may be *trying* to achieve something recognisable as socialism — a word which Harold Wilson and James Callaghan rarely used. Neil Kinnock has told friends that he will be more radical in government than he can afford to be in opposition. But he has also told everyone that there are limits to what a Labour government can do, that eight years of Thatcherism have squeezed the scope for socialism.

Unlike Wilson, openly contemptuous of the Bennite programme he was stuck with, Kinnock says, to paraphrase, 'yes, I too am committed to bringing about our socialist paradise, but not everybody else is, which makes it difficult in a democracy, so while you lot go out and convince the electorate and I do my best on telly, I'll run a progressive government giving people those bits of paradise that the polls say they already want'.

The trouble with progressive governments is that they tend to get blown off course, by the world economy and just about anything else that happens to be passing.

Kinnock's ability to weather the world whirlwind depends crucially on how well-prepared the teams of advisers propping up his Shadow Cabinet are. Two of the most important planks, jobs and a non-nuclear defence policy, provide case studies in how ready they are to face the electorate, the civil service, the Americans and the Liberals, not necessarily in that order.

### Jobs: 8 out of 10

Labour's short-term economic policy can now be summed up in a sentence. It is to cut dole queues by 1 million in two years, to reflate prudently and to take £3.6 billion a year from the rich to attack poverty.

The two-year emergency programme of public works on houses, schools and hospitals is credible but it is not yet specific. At least, the *target* is specific, but how it's to be reached is not, yet. The confusion over 'creating 1 million jobs' versus 'cutting unemployment by 1 million', which involves creating perhaps 1.5 million jobs because of the unrecorded workless, has been resolved in favour of the more ambitious target.

The Shadow Cabinet is still in the middle of the detailed exercise designed to back up this 'headline' commitment. That's what the talks with nationalised industries about the scope for more jobs — leaked to the *Guardian* — were about. The *Guardian* leak wasn't intended to assist Labour, but it exposed the presentational problem (Michael '*Death Wish*' Winner on *Any Questions* prating about four postal deliveries a day to the Outer Hebrides). There isn't much time to sort out the good images (trains, teachers, building anything) from the bad (British Rail, Post Office, civil servants). Despite Roy Hattersley's urging, local councils haven't yet drawn up plans to boost labour-intensive spending.

Labour's plans to tax the rich to alleviate



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poverty are at the same state. In outline the plan is 'cautiously radical', but the detailed figures to make the case stand up haven't yet been calculated.

In view of the SDP's boldly going where no one wants to go with its feebly redistributive tax/benefit plan, this may appear wise. But Labour's reluctance to put figures to its plans allows the SDP to assert its 'radicalism' unchallenged, when the truth is that Labour intends to target the burden of taxation much more accurately on the rich and provide more generous and better-thought-out benefits to the poor. If the worst Chancellor Nigel Lawson can say about Labour's package is that it would entail a top tax rate on extra income for those earning at least £43,500 of only 70 per cent — currently 60 per cent — then that proves that Labour's sums will add up. But they haven't been done yet.

As you read this, Bill McKenzie, a partner in accountants Price Waterhouse nick-named 'Mr Squeeze' by the *Daily Mail*, is struggling over tax manuals and plotting how to get back the £3.6 billion a year that the richest 5 per cent of the population are enjoying in tax cuts. He has taken time off from the firm to prepare a range of options to be presented to the Shadow Cabinet by the end of the year.

## Non-unclear (sic) defence policy

Hell hath no fury like an ally scorned, and the United States doesn't take kindly to small nations which decide democratically not to take advantage of the Pentagon's generous offer of 'protection'. As the US ambassador to Nicaragua explains his support for the *contra* guerrillas: 'We have the strength'.

US Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's attack on Labour's non-nuclear defence policy (to be broadcast on Monday's *Panorama*) may be counterproductive. But it reveals the same lack of inhibition.

The official party line is that this is not a problem. Defence spokesperson Denzil Davies is on the record as saying 'Where there's a will there's a way'. This applies, apparently, to both White House and the 90 per cent pro-nuclear Ministry of Defence.

'It could well make sense to say that there is no problem in public', says CND vice chair Dan Smith, 'as long as detailed preparations were going on in private'. There's no sign that this is the case.

Denis Healey and his advisors are believed to think that the Americans won't mind taking cruise back — it doesn't work very well and Gorbachev is now willing to remove SS20s in return — nor would they mind closing their Poseidon submarine bases in Scotland — Poseidon is about to be replaced.

The tricky bit is closing US 'nuclear' bases. As Dan Smith says, 'the nuclear element is very integrated into US forces', and it's not easy to distinguish between 'nuclear capable', such as the F1-11s that bombed Libya, from 'nuclear weapons'. The trouble is, as David Owen realised about the Alliance's defence policy, that unless the timetable and the mechanics are sorted out, it could unravel during the election campaign, let alone afterwards.

GIVEN THAT FEAR of leaving Britain defenceless is still one of Labour's perceived weaknesses among the electorate (*NS* 22 August), it's worrying that the planned 'campaign' on defence and international issues hasn't materialised. It was planned, along the lines of the Jobs and Industry and Freedom and Fairness campaigns, to run through this autumn.

One of the by-products of the Chernobyl disaster has been to strengthen the peace movement in Western Europe. This could have been exploited by Labour to win support for its non-nuclear defence policy as well as its non-nuclear energy policy (see Rob Edwards, p.10).

In West Germany the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) Congress last month voted for the removal of cruise and Pershing, although the manifesto for the January general election is to be decided by Chancellor-candidate Joahannes Rau next month.

Although an SPD government in Bonn is unlikely, a good SPD vote in January could assist a British Labour government. The logic of rejecting a US client role in NATO is that a Kinnock government would have a more Euro-focused foreign policy.

These are, as Austin Mitchell writes on p.8, deep waters, given the unresolved ambiguities of Labour policy on the European Community. George Foulkes, Labour's deputy Euro-spokesperson (and a pro-Marketeer in the days when the label

## The Missing Manifesto

NO ONE will talk about the manifesto. Officials at Labour HQ at Walworth Road and Kinnock's office won't say more than that the manifesto will be drawn up in the manner prescribed by the constitution — clause 5, the one after the famous one — that is, by the Shadow Cabinet and the National Executive meeting together.

The timing of this meeting isn't specified in clause 5, but is likely to take place only when an election is announced, although the process of ordering Labour's priorities has begun. 'The flesh will start to be put on the bones in the year following conference', says a Walworth Road spokesperson.

Peter Hain of the 'soft left' Labour Co-ordinating Committee accuses Neil Kinnock of wanting a 'travelling light' document. After the dismal spectacle of Michael Foot trudging into a Saatchi snowstorm with the 284-page *Labour's Programme 1982* on his back, who can blame him?

Indeed, it is Walworth Road's official line that the party shouldn't go into the election bound hand, foot and head by a thousand yards of fine print. This time no one is interested in publishing a full list of the Labour Party Programme: policies which have been passed by a two-thirds majority at conference and which are thus eligible for inclusion in the manifesto. *Labour's Programme 1982* is a heavy book, from which *New Hope for Britain*, a shorter but still very long version, was drawn up in March 1986. The clause 5 meeting in May 1983 was a nervous affair which quickly agreed to dodge the difficult questions by adopting the whole of *New Hope* as the manifesto (Peter Shore alone dissenting).

This time, the right wing (in traditional Labour terms) has a majority in the combined Shadow Cabinet and National Executive, with 26 votes excluding the leader out of 49. As there's an additional block of 13 soft left votes for anything a little too *modern* for Charlie Turnock and Peter Archer Neil Kinnock can win a vote for almost anything he wants — or more importantly doesn't want — to put in the manifesto. ●

## The World According to Eric S. Heffer

> 'The Labour Party has long been a type of political coalition, with strong socialist and non-socialist currents, uneasily existing side by side within it. The socialist current, whilst immensely influential and almost dominant for a short time, has never really had control of the Party, and when it looked as if it might, sections of the right-wing, non-socialist current split away.'

Thus handing the party to the left wing? Well, no. According to Heffer.

> 'What we are witnessing today is the transformation of the party into another SDP, a party which, although retaining a written socialist constitution, finds it increasingly being ignored. The difference between past and present periods of revisionism is that those who carried out the revisionist policies in the past were strongly combated, whereas today they are virtually unopposed, because everyone in the party wants to defeat Thatcherism at the next general election, and no one wants to be accused of rocking the boat.'

Eric Heffer's book *Labour's Future: Socialist or SDP Mark 2?*, published this week, gives new meaning to the word 'fundamentalism' (as well as coining two very useful entirely new words, 'solidarising' and 'fissurious').

Heffer describes — indeed devotes a whole chapter to — 'The Shift to the Right', and identifies a possible cause.

> 'The scars of the 1983 defeat run deep: we received a fearful drubbing from the capitalist press and the entire establishment united against us. The reaction to this has been for some in the party, including some who are supposedly on the left, to say that we must moderate our policy so that it seems acceptable to the media and the interests they serve. They say we should proceed with stealth, obtaining what reforms we can get here and there, but we must not make an all-out assault on capitalism and those who politically support it.'

This is the wrong reaction, and Heffer calls on 'the membership' to uphold the good, basic traditions of the party' — because they are *true*: 'as true now as when they were formulated'.

The rightward drift, therefore, is a misguided response to the 1983 defeat. The correct response is 'revolutionary reformism':

> 'I believe the best way to win the election is to be bold, to argue the socialist case unflinchingly and not to pretend that we do not want to change society in any fundamental way. People like to know what political parties stand for and what they intend to do.
>
> 'No doubt the type of policies I put forward will be classified by old friends in the Socialist Workers Party as 'left reformist'. It is a charge I will have to live with. Stafford Cripps, in 1932, wrote a pamphlet, *Can Socialism Come by Constitutional Means?* His answer to this question was 'Yes, but only just', and I agree with this position.'

*Labour's Future* is published by Verso, £4.95 paperback.



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mattered), says: 'The strongest argument that convinces people now is the need for joint European action — just last night I was speaking about Chile and people talked about working with our European partners to put pressure on Pinochet'.

He also warns that 'US arrogance is not to be underestimated'. This is why Denzil Davies's machismo politics — rather similar to Neil Kinnock's — needs buttressing with solid policy on which US bases are to go when. These nuts and bolts are to be tackled by Labour's defence team after any Reagan-Gorbachev summit this winter.

## The Verdict

It will take several months to draw up a detailed goof-proof prospectus for Labour's first year in office. Some parts are within sight of being election-ready; others haven't even been started on. Time is short, and the Shadow Cabinet is to meet — calculators at the ready — at Rottingdean, the print union SOGAT's country retreat near Brighton, on 7-8 October, the week after conference.

But there are still two deep doubts about Labour's state of readiness for the polls. One is 'the longer term', where most of the policies passed by a two-thirds majority at Labour conference are now to be found.

The other is that a hung parliament, according to the bookmakers, is the most likely outcome of the next election (Ladbroke quotes odds of 1-3 on, or three times more likely than not). Every Shadow Cabinet adviser we spoke to denied that this was a problem, and said, for instance, they had given 'no serious thought' to the implications of minority or coalition government. If they're telling the truth, the people they advise should be alarmed. There's a difference between being upbeat and being beaten up. The insistence that the Alliance will have to accept the whole of Labour's programme or face another election could force the Alliance to support a 'wet' Tory government (Paradise Rained Off?).

For both the long term or a hung Parliament the Labour Party has in the end to fall back on the socialist integrity of the first leader it — the wider party — elected. (Fewer than half of Labour MPs voted for Kinnock in 1983: he got 14.8 percentage points of the parliamentary party's 30 per cent share of the electoral college).

Neil Kinnock's enthusiasm for the new Labour government at Blackpool in 1974 was punctured by his wife Glenys: 'Don't be stupid, Neil. These are the people who sold us out last time and they'll do just the same next'.* This was a telling incident, not because Glenys can be relied on to keep the next prime minister on course, but because it reveals the sense of betrayal that shaped Neil's political history. For all the taunts of 'the new Harold Wilson', Kinnock comes out of an utterly different culture. He is half the age of Wilson the Oxford don and Callaghan the civil servant — wartime administrators with the prosaic ambition of 'good' (or even 'natural') government. Kinnock, on the other hand, is a 1960s product of CND, Anti-Apartheid and televisual idealism. □

*Quoted by Robert Harris in *The Making of Neil Kinnock*, 1984, Faber.

CONTROVERSY

# GAPING HOLES IN LABOUR'S BANNER

**Labour's problem, says AUSTIN MITCHELL MP, is that it views winning and governing as two distinct processes. It's giving a lot of thought to the former, but almost none to the latter**

**'If there is a mood at all now, it is "gather ye rosebuds"'**

COMING BACK from the dead is so exciting we are apt to confuse it with real life. Neil Kinnock, a better leader than we deserved, has done the necessary trick of coming from the left the better to lead us to the right: he has both a hard drive to power and a grasp of how to get it. The disabling left has withdrawn into 30 varieties of futility, or whatever the current membership of the Campaign Group may be. All pure gain. Yet all this has done little to put Labour in the lead compared to the fall of Margaret Thatcher in an act of *felo de se*.

Two political truisms have been confirmed: oppositions don't win, governments lose. Yet when that occurred before, in 1964 and 1974, Labour was in a stronger position than now. In 1974 we were the inevitable alternative. Not now. This isn't because the Alliance blocks us in the South, but because if they start an election campaign near 30 per cent, every certainty is thrown into chaos.

In 1964 we provided the focus for a longing for change: the desire to throw out fuddy duddies and help the classless, consumer Britain struggle into its Burton's suit. Now desire for change has narrowed to 'get her out' and there is no consensus on any alternative. Then affluence had taken hold. The desire was to get more and distribute it more fairly. Now if there is a mood at all, it is 'gather ye rosebuds'. Uncertainty, doubt, a growing national inferiority complex, fear of the technological future and a disbelief in all


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politicians make it difficult to either market an alternative or chime in with a national consensus.

Our policy processes are little help, being principally designed to keep the party entertained. We dislike vested interest and 'self-regulation', yet sanctify both in our political processes: a series of vetos, not a bubbling spring of ideas: dominated by vested interests not research, analysis, or sales. The SDP has far too many bright ideas. We prefer the Herod-to-babies approach.

Neil Kinnock has given the sales force, the PLP, as big a say as the ideological engineers, so our BL disease is cured. Yet no one synthesises, budgets or evaluates for saleability, national interest or socialist priorities. The final blend is unveiled only after a joint meeting between Shadow Cabinet and NEC before an election. Until then no one knows what we stand for, hares start in all directions, the nation gets nothing to mull over until the meal is dished up, 'take it or leave it', like army cooking. An enormous amount of work is now going into weaving Labour's banner. Parts of it look good. Yet it also has gaping holes because to fill them would produce bitter rows.

Number One is the EEC. The leadership is walking backwards into the Common Market. Unwillingness to discuss the issue excludes consideration of measures, such as repeal of Section 2 of the European Communities Act, to protect our interests while remaining in. Instead we pursue mirages of co-operation with European Socialists, of 'collective expansion', or of 'doing what we have to do and letting them respond'.

The Mitterrand trap, Keynesianism in one country aborted because it threatened membership, is ignored. So are legal realities. Any action contrary to European law can be struck down by *our* courts, or theirs — public purchasing policies, support for industry, import controls, subsidies for public enterprises, increased production in steel or shipbuilding; everything we need to rebuild the economy.

On defence, perhaps because of the strength of CND in the party, perhaps because Neil Kinnock sees unilateralism as his last fig-leaf, we have lumbered into a divisive, unsaleable policy. Intellectually, a non-nuclear strategy is right. Yet educating the nation against a hostile media and a public seeing nuclear weapons as a vestige of imperial virility is unlikely in the time available. Our delivery systems will soon be as useful as motorcycle couriers. The nation may not even care if it sees the bomb as a status symbol. It knows that to give up weapons with no *quid pro quo* is naive.

THE INCOMES POLICY black hole brings in the question of the unions. Inflation won't be a problem immediately. The pound will slip, one hopes massively. Yet the inherited inflation rate will be low: it always is in graveyards. Over a longer-term, though, there can be no expansion without inflation, a party dedicated to replacing imports by local manufacture must increase their price, and an economy which has closed capacity and undermined training will come quickly to bottle-necks. So we need a policy, if only to stop things getting out of control, and we need it in advance. But the union movement whose incomes policy saved the last Labour government is no more. Giants replaced by pygmies. The TGWU rudderless, the TUC lacking power and leadership. Labour needs unions who can come to deals and implement them, not hands clutching blank cheques. We have more to offer them — growth, jobs, the repeal of nasty legislation — than they have us.

The last black hole is Britain's future: what happens after the Oil? Tory government has turned long comparative decline into approaching disaster. In the '90s, possibly in the life of the next government, the chickens clustering on every available perch will blacken the skies. Our answers to this and every other economic question are statist: public spending, public sector, public investment. We must reform the tax system to make it less regressive, perhaps à la SDP, if it is to carry the burden. We also need to print money and take on unfunded debt. The real problem, the rest of the economy, remains.

Competitiveness is the key. We lost the jobs and industries because we lacked it. It can only be restored either by years of freeze and squeeze or by a heavily devalued pound to trigger a big boost to growth. The cautious respectability necessary to live down the follies of 1979-83 outlaws either. Broaching the basic questions renews old battles. Fundamentalist socialists will return to life and proffer the state as their answer. The siege-economists, who subsequently embraced an equally insane 'Euro-AES', will revive. The 'economists' who see answers in devaluation, exchange control, Reagan-type Keynesianism and control of banking to force minimal interest rates, all of which makes Roy Hattersley nervous, will be rampant. Exploring the problem unleashes the babble. So we look grave, fingers crossed behind our backs, and work at showing the City how respectable we are, rather than asserting control of Finance, as we must, to manage Britain's destinies.

WE ARE VIEWING winning and governing as two distinct processes. They are a continuum. The electorate see this. Even if they didn't our opponents will point it out. Policies have to be seen, and felt, to be right for governing, to be aids for winning. Looking as though we have answers we can't divulge is useful. Shouting real ones and having the inner confidence of knowing they are right, rather more so. Instead we concentrate on damage limitation. Our themes are ambivalent: Party of Production or Freedom and Fairness Folk? Build a better yesterday (which our voters really want) or the pluralistic tomorrow preferred by the ones we've got to win? No single, encompassing slogan is possible. Meanwhile the industrial base on which we must build anything at all disintegrates.

Our wise abandonment of the instant socialist wrong answers of 1979-84 seems to have taken us back to the caution and timidity of a right, which had no idea anyway. Glossed up by public relations. Eschewing the huge effort of thinking the world anew means we end up with a better, glossier, nicer, even faster version of the prevailing drift. It leads inevitably to the disaster of the mid-'90s. We're not even sounding the warning. □

## Council scoreboard

3 July

| | |
|---|---|
| **Torfaen DC** | LAB GAIN (Ind) |
| **Blackpool DC** | LIB GAIN (Con) |
| **Pendle DC** | LIB GAIN (Lab) |
| **North Yorks CC** | LIB GAIN (Ind) |
| **Harrogate DC** | CON GAIN (Ind) |
| **Ashfield DC** | Lab hold |
| **Ashfield DC** | Lab hold |
| **Calderdale DC** | Lab hold |
| **Wrexham Maelor DC** | Lab hold |
| **Wrexham Maelor DC** | Lab hold |
| **NE Derbyshire DC** | Lab hold |
| **Tower Hamlets LBC** | Lib hold |
| **Devon CC** | Con hold |
| **North Wilts DC** | Con hold |
| **Blaby DC** | Con hold |
| **Blaby DC** | Con hold |

10 July

| | |
|---|---|
| **Scarborough DC** | LIB GAIN (Con) |
| **Lewisham LBC** | CON GAIN (Lab) |
| **Thurrock DC** | Lab hold |
| **Lichfield DC** | Lab hold |
| **Corby DC** | Lab hold |
| **Barnsley DC** | Lab hold |
| **Northampton DC** | Lab hold |
| **Wokingham DC** | Con hold |
| **Huntingdon DC** | Con hold |

17 July

| | |
|---|---|
| **Alnwick DC** | LIB GAIN (Ind) |
| **Vale Royal DC** | CON GAIN (Ind) |
| **West Lancs DC** | Lab hold |
| **Lichfield DC** | Lab hold |
| **Knowsley DC** | Lab hold |
| **East Staffs DC** | Lab hold |
| **Newbury DC** | Lib hold |
| **Rother DC** | Lib hold |
| **Bournemouth DC** | Con hold |

24 July

| | |
|---|---|
| **Southwark LBC** | LAB GAIN (Lib) |
| **New Forest DC** | LIB GAIN (Lab) |
| **Stockport DC** | Lib hold |
| **Beverley DC** | Con hold |

31 July

| | |
|---|---|
| **Newcastle upon Tyne DC** | Lab hold |

7 August

| | |
|---|---|
| **Stafford DC** | SDP GAIN (Con) |
| **Charnwood DC** | SDP GAIN (Con) |
| **Great Yarmouth DC** | Lab hold |
| **Bolton DC** | Lab hold |

14 August

| | |
|---|---|
| **Edinburgh DC** | Lab hold |
| **Liverpool DC** | Lab hold |
| **Midlothian DC** | Lab hold |

4 September

| | |
|---|---|
| **Blackpool DC** | LAB GAIN (Con) |
| **Walsall DC** | LAB GAIN (Ind) |
| **Horsham DC** | LIB GAIN (Con) |
| **Hart DC** | LIB GAIN (Ind) |
| **Ryedale DC** | LIB GAIN (Ind) |
| **East Yorks DC** | SDP GAIN (Con) |
| **East Herts DC** | CON GAIN (Ind) |
| **Daventry DC** | Lab hold |
| **Swansea DC** | Lab hold |
| **South Ribble DC** | Con hold |
| **Humberside CC** | Con hold |

11 September

| | |
|---|---|
| **Reading DC** | LIB GAIN (Con) |
| **Leicester DC** | LIB GAIN (Con) |
| **Torbay DC** | Lib hold |

18 September

| | |
|---|---|
| **Wiltshire CC** | LAB GAIN (SDP) |
| **Wansdyke DC** | LAB GAIN (Con) |
| **Leeds DC** | LIB GAIN (Con) |
| **Berkshire CC** | SDP GAIN (Con) |
| **Cannock Chase DC** | SDP GAIN (Con) |
| **Bradford DC** | Lab hold |
| **Enfield LBC** | Lab hold |
| **Cheshire CC** | Lab hold |
| **York DC** | Lib hold |
| **Barking LBC** | Lib hold |
| **Kings Lynn DC** | SDP hold |
| **Rushcliffe DC** | Con hold |

*See* ***Peter Kellner*** *(opposite) for commentary*



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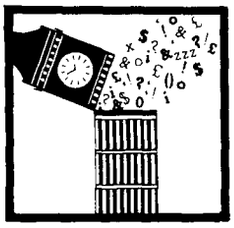

# Steel pays the price of cuddling up to Owen

IT HAD ALL been going so well. The two Davids had reconciled their differences on defence. They had made progress (or so they thought) with the French on the notion of a Euro-bomb. Owen had squared the SDP at Harrogate. All that remained was for Steel to deliver this week's Liberal Assembly at Eastbourne.

Steel's delivery system failed. It failed partly because he underestimated Liberal suspicions of all things nuclear, partly because many Liberals felt they were being bounced by Owen and resented it, and partly because no senior Liberal has thought through how an Anglo-French deterrent would operate.

Politically the Eastbourne vote could not have come at a worse time for the Alliance. The normal autumn cycle is for Alliance support to peak in September, then to slip as media coverage of the Labour and Conservative conferences causes memories of the Liberal and SDP gatherings to fade. Each September the task for the Alliance leaders is essentially the same: to put on a public show that will win new converts and make more permanent the allegiance of existing, often temporary, supporters.

Our latest survey of local council by-elections (opposite) shows that the Alliance parties have been doing better this summer than might have been expected from the polls. It is common for Alliance support in by-elections to be higher than in nationwide opinion polls; but the divergence this summer has been more marked than ever. Polls have put the Alliance at around 25 per cent; in by-elections since early July their share of the vote has been 36 per cent; and in a spate of by-elections during the past fortnight they have averaged 40 per cent. (The detailed July-September figures are shown below right, with individual results listed on the facing page.)

There has been every reason, then, for the two Davids to be optimistic about the Alliance's electoral prospects. A 25 per cent baseline would allow them to repeat in a general election campaign what they did in 1983 and in countless parliamentary and local by-elections during the past five years, and increase their share to 30 per cent or more. Alliance politicians needed to veer only slightly to the optimistic side of realism to hope for 50 or more Alliance MPs in the next Parliament holding the balance between Labour and the Tories.

A display of harmony between the Liberals and the SDP has always been vital to that strategy. This week that harmony has collapsed. Why?

DAVID STEEL's strategic mistake was to give ground three months ago when Owen repudiated the joint SDP/Liberal defence commission's view that no decision need be taken yet on 'whether and if so how' Britain should remain a nuclear power when Polaris finally rusts away. Had Steel argued with Owen at that stage, he would have risked a blazing row with the doctor. However, Steel could have presented himself as the true 'Alliance' politician: and he would have carried a near-united Liberal Party with him. Owen might well have found himself isolated within the SDP and have been forced to accept the joint commission's report without qualification.

Steel declined to take this course. He takes little personal interest in defence

**PETER KELLNER**

policy; he is always ready to defer to Owen's greater knowledge and experience. (Some senior Liberals wonder whether he is truly interested in *any* policy area: his skill, they reckon, lies in political management rather than policy-making.)

Instead of defending robustly the commission's views, Steel chose to move towards Owen's position. The further he moved, the more he looked like a fly caught in a spider's web. Had Steel truly come to believe in the virtues of an Anglo-French nuclear deterrent, and understood its technical, diplomatic and strategic implications, he could have won this week's vote. Instead he looked like a man for whom the fact of a deal with Owen was all that mattered; he couldn't care less about the substance.

Steel's failure to grasp what an Anglo-French deterrent would mean (or, rather, what Owen thought it would mean) was demonstrated last Sunday on BBC 1's *This Week, Next Week*. Twice David Dimbleby asked Steel if Britain would be able to fire its bombs independently of the French. Twice Steel said yes. Yet Owen has made it clear that he wants shared decision-taking: it is to be a *European* bomb, not a European-made *British* bomb.

At Eastbourne, Steel dug himself into yet deeper trouble. He was asked for his reaction to Paddy Ashdown's observation that Britain would be breaking the Non-Proliferation Treaty if it bought French missiles. Steel's answer was that as long as the total 'throw weight' of the new missiles was no greater than that of Polaris, Britain would remain within international law.

This is nonsense. The treaty is concerned not with throw-weights but with the transfer of nuclear weapons between countries. What Steel should have said was that (as with Trident) Britain keeps within the letter — though not the spirit — of the treaty as long as British-made warheads are used; as we would be buying only the missiles from France, we would be all right.

James Wallace, the Liberals' defence spokesman, understands this point. But he flounders when faced with the next criticism: that if (as both Davids say they want) a comprehensive test ban treaty is signed within the next two or three years, it would be impossible for Britain to test the new warheads it would have to design to fit on the French missiles without breaking *that* treaty.

Wallace acknowledges the problem and admits he has no solution. He says Owen talks about computer-simulated tests, but has no idea what this means or how they would work.

For many people — especially those who regard all nuclear weapons as an obscenity — these may appear arcane points. Their importance lies in what they reveal of the way Owen and Steel have operated during the past three months. Owen has a genuine commitment to the notion of a European minimum deterrent and, as I argued in this space last week, a determination to make nuclear weapons a sticking point in any negotiations in a hung Parliament. Owen communicated his determination to his party and, with a little tactical manoeuvring, carried it with him.

Steel, on the other hand, tried to busk it as he went. He had no convictions, it showed and he lost. Owen may not have liked the result of Tuesday's debate at Eastbourne; but he has emerged from the past fortnight as far more effective and accomplished a party leader than Steel — and more principled, too. □

## Avant le deluge . . .

In 51 three-cornered contests between early July and last week — with candidates from Labour, the Conservatives and the Alliance — more than 110,000 votes were cast: they were distributed as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Liberal/SDP** | 40,433 | 36.2% |
| **Labour** | 36,441 | 32.6% |
| **Conservative** | 32,529 | 29.1% |
| **Others** | 2,285 | 2.0% |

Taking all 72 contests into account, these were the gains and losses:

| | Seats defended | Seats lost | Seats gained | Seats held now |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Con** | 24 | 13 | 4 | 15 |
| **Lab** | 29 | 3 | 6 | 32 |
| **Lib** | 8 | 1 | 11 | 18 |
| **SDP** | 2 | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| **Others** | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 |



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# ROLL UP THOSE BLUEPRINTS

**Unless the Tories get in again, says ROB EDWARDS, there's going to be a fundamental shift away from nuclear power**

ONE OF AMERICA'S atomic forefathers, Alvin Weinberg, once described nuclear power as a 'Faustian bargain'. In exchange for the present luxury of electricity, the world accepts the eternal risks of radiation. In return for energy for food, shelter and warmth, nations accumulate radioactive waste. For the sake of our microwaves, videos and compact disc players, we all live with the threat of nuclear extinction.

Since 26 April 1986, one side of the bargain has suddenly become much clearer. Thirty-one already dead, somewhere between 2,000 (official estimate) and 280,000 (independent estimate) still to die, 135,000 made homeless, poisoned land, polluted water, pestilent food.

Chernobyl has revolutionised the international politics of nuclear power. The arguments are no longer over which nuclear stations should be built, but over which ones should be cancelled or closed down. Political parties are not asking how they can live with nuclear power, they are finding out how they can live without it. Throughout the world, and especially in Europe (*see box*), governments are pausing for thought.

## Rapid progress

In Britain the distances covered by the political parties have been remarkable to behold. The last government minister to order any nuclear power stations was Labour's Energy Secretary, Tony Benn, in 1978. He was responsible for the Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactors (AGRs) now nearing completion at Torness in East Lothian and Heysham near Lancaster. He also gave the go-ahead to build the controversial Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (THORP) at Windscale in Cumbria.

Now, according to the behind-the-scenes architect of much of Labour's new nuclear energy strategy, campaign co-ordinator Robin Cook MP: 'It is a sign of how far the party has shifted that the debate is no longer about whether we halt the nuclear programme but about how fast we can roll it back.'

Next week in Blackpool Labour will agree a radically anti-nuclear policy aimed at phasing out Britain's dependence on nuclear electricity. It will accept a National Executive Committee statement promising:

- not to start up Torness and Heysham;
- a 'clear programme' for closing down the first generation Magnox stations;
- the phasing out of the second generation AGRs over 'decades';
- the cancellation of plans to build an American-style Pressurised Water Reactor at Sizewell in Suffolk; and
- the abandonment of the European plutonium fuel reprocessing plant proposed for Dounreay in Caithness.

## Greenpeace plays tough

Although most of the party's anti-nuclear activists are pleasantly surprised by how far the statement goes, they still do not think that it goes far enough. That is why a three-page composite including the ideas and words of 171 separate motions has been drafted by the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA) to try and toughen up the NEC's stance.

The composite, which is almost certain to win a two-thirds majority, would commit the NEC to drawing up a timetable for the phasing out of all Britain's nuclear reactors within 15 years — a schedule similar to that being implemented in Sweden, proposed by the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) in West Germany and advocated by Friends of the Earth in Britain.

Greenpeace, however, is taking a much harder line by demanding a complete nuclear shut-down within four years of the next election. Last week it published an impressive study purporting to demonstrate that such a tight timescale was technically feasible and

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# Nuclear power in Europe after Chernobyl

*Countries with no existing or planned nuclear power*

**Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway** and **Portugal**.

*Countries where nuclear power could be phased out*

**Austria** has built one nuclear power station at Zwentendorf which has never generated any electricity because of an anti-nuclear referendum decision in 1978. The station will now certainly be dismantled.

**Britain** generates about 20 per cent of its electricity from 18 nuclear stations, with two more under construction. The Labour opposition has just committed itself to phasing out nuclear power.

**West Germany** generates about a third of its electricity from 20 nuclear stations. Five more stations are under construction with a further nine at the planning stage. Last month, the SPD opposition party approved a plan to phase out nuclear power over ten years.

**Sweden** generates about 45 per cent of its electricity from 12 nuclear reactors. A national referendum in 1980 voted to phase out nuclear power by the year 2010. The feasibility of such a policy was increasingly questioned in 1984 and 1985, but, after Chernobyl, there is a renewed political commitment to carry it through.

*Countries abandoning nuclear expansion plans*

**Finland** generates about 40 per cent of its electricity from four nuclear reactors. A planned fifth reactor has now been shelved, perhaps permanently.

**Italy** generates about 4 per cent of its electricity from three nuclear stations, with another due for completion in the early 1990s. Its ambitious plan to build six new reactors over the next decade looks likely to flounder as a result of the Socialist Party's new-found opposition to nuclear expansion.

**The Netherlands** generates about 7 per cent of its electricity from two nuclear reactors. Two proposed new reactors were shelved by the Dutch government after Chernobyl.

**Spain** generates about 21 per cent of its electricity from eight nuclear stations. Work on five reactors was halted in 1984 following a review conducted by the new Socialist government. After two further reactors have been commissioned in the next two years, no more nuclear expansion is likely because of Chernobyl.

**Switzerland** generates about 34 per cent of its electricity from five nuclear reactors. After Chernobyl the government announced a 'de facto moratorium' on three proposed new plants at Kaiseraugst, Graben and Verbois. The country's second-largest political party, the Social Democrats, is now urging the gradual abandonment of nuclear power.

*Nuclear enthusiasts*

**Belgium** generates about 60 per cent of its electricity from seven nuclear reactors. It has taken a 25 per cent stake in the French Chooz reactor due to come into operation in the early 1990s. Its plan to order a new reactor for construction in the late 1980s might be delayed because of Chernobyl.

**France** generates about 70 per cent of its electricity from over 40 nuclear reactors, with another 17 or so under construction. The only government response to Chernobyl has been a campaign to try to convince worried neighbouring countries that French reactors are safe. The French people, however, are less than content — an opinion poll commissioned by the electricity industry showed that 48 per cent were against nuclear power, the highest proportion since 1977.

*Eastern Europe*

Less information is available on post-Chernobyl developments behind the iron curtain. In **Poland** construction of the country's first nuclear power station has been delayed because of safety fears. **Romania** is reviewing its nuclear plans (its first reactor is already 12 years behind schedule) and **Yugoslavia** has cancelled its plans for a second reactor. Nuclear ambitions in **East Germany** (five reactors in operation, six under construction), **Czechoslovakia** (six, ten), **Hungary** (two, two) and **Bulgaria** (four, two), are not likely to change. ●

would not increase the risk of electricity disconnections.

The SERA composite also calls for the outright cancellation of THORP — certain to be the sharpest conflict at next week's conference. THORP is dear to Sellafield's MP, Dr John Cunningham, who has fought a fierce rearguard action to protect it. After the NEC agreed a last-minute amendment safeguarding the plant, he told his local newspaper that this was a 'great victory' for him.

But the position the amendment obliged the NEC to adopt is technically and politically unsound. The party is committed to finish constructing the plant, but then not to commission it for the purpose for which it was built. Instead THORP will somehow be used 'to develop the technology of waste disposal and storage'.

SUCH INCOHERENCE is indicative of the fact that Cunningham is tiring of the fight. Yet most of the key anti-nuclear tacticians continue to insist that any renewal of the public campaign to shift him as shadow environment spokesman would be dangerously counter-productive. The persistent rumours that Labour leader Neil Kinnock is ready to move him will *remain* as rumours if people start baying for his blood.

Kinnock's own role in Labour's post-Chernobyl manoeuvres has been much misunderstood. He is instinctively anti-nuclear, but unwilling to promise any specific plant closures because of an overriding concern to preserve jobs. He no longer regards

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Cunningham as his blue-eyed boy.

When the *Guardian* suggested recently that Kinnock had sided with Cunningham in consistently opposing the phasing out of nuclear power, Kinnock was so furious that he was cursing down the telephone early in the morning. Given that the policy statement advocating the nuclear phase-out had found its way to the NEC via Kinnock's office, his fury was perhaps understandable.

The Liberals have a respectable record of opposition to nuclear power. A motion before this week's Assembly calls for 'a halt to the commissioning of further nuclear installations' and a 'planned phasing out of all nuclear power'. In the past party officials have said that a phase-out could take place over 10-15 years. But in a recent confidential draft policy document entitled 'Energy 2000', the Liberals reiterate their belief that research into the plutonium-fuelled fast reactor should continue.

Although they have 'serious reservations about the development of a plutonium-based energy industry in terms of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the threat to civil liberties', they hope that the fast reactor might be used to help solve the problem of nuclear waste. Unfortunately, the fast reactor research programme they are supporting is directed almost entirely towards developing the plutonium economy, not solving the waste problem.

Such an irrational position has a political explanation in the form of the Social Democratic MP for Caithness and Sutherland, Robert Maclennan — the John Cunningham of the Alliance. The bulk of fast reactor research is done at the Dounreay site, by far the largest employer in his constituency. He has so far succeeded in keeping both Alliance partners committed to maintaining Dounreay.

The more difficult problem of resolving the deep differences between Maclennan and the Liberals (especially the Orkney and Shetland MP Jim Wallace) over the European plutonium fuel reprocessing plant proposed for Dounreay has thus been elegantly resolved. The SDP simply do not have a policy on it.

The SDP's overall position on nuclear power after its conference last week was described by one anti-nuclear insider as 'agnostic'. Its formal policy is not to order any more nuclear reactors for several years while a thorough safety review is carried out. That means that it is easily the most pro-nuclear of all the major opposition parties, and the closest to the 'freeze' policy recently agreed by the TUC. It is also out of line with its voters, 59 per cent of whom, according to a Gallup poll carried out by CND, favour phasing out nuclear power.

## Owen now shaky

There is much horse-trading to take place within the Alliance before the next general election. If — despite this week's Liberal Assembly vote — David Owen eventually wins his battle over defence policy he is said by party sources to be prepared to back off on nuclear energy, should the Liberals push hard enough. There is every indication that the Liberals will do just that.

The Conservatives are the only major political party to have nailed their colours irretrievably to the nuclear mast. In the 1970s there used to be a small but articulate Tory anti-nuclear lobby, with MPs such as Nigel Forman frequently speaking out. Since the advent of Thatcherism, however, it has disappeared deep underground.

The only hint of doubt in the Tory camp is over how to handle the Sizewell decision. A couple of alternatives have been floated via press leaks: delay it until after a general election to avoid political embarrassment, or grab the bull by the horns and order the station at the earliest opportunity. Thatcher's instincts would clearly be for the latter course.

EITHER WAY, Sir Frank Layfield's much-heralded report of his two-and-a-quarter year public inquiry has become a monumental irrelevance. Because of the rules under which the inquiry was conducted, his formal recommendations cannot take account of events that have occurred since proceedings ended in March 1985. His report, in other words, will ignore such minor happenings as the collapse of oil prices and Chernobyl.

In any case all the political parties have already decided what to do about Sizewell. Regardless of what Layfield says, the Tories will order it. Any other shade of government would cancel it. Due to be delivered to Energy Secretary Peter Walker within the next couple of weeks, the Layfield report is thus bound to be something of a lemon.

The post-Chernobyl political sea-change in Britain has been pervasive. It may not be permanent. But the betting is that, after the next general election, any result other than a third Conservative victory would mean a fundamental move away from nuclear power. If the Tories get back in, Mephistopheles will have a field day. □


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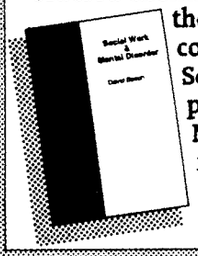

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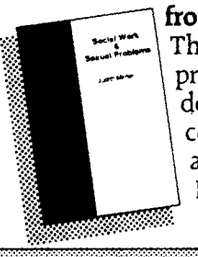

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# In their pockets not one penny

PLUTO PRESS is down, but it's not yet out. Many of the titles of Britain's most ambitious left-wing publishers, and possibly even its name, may live on. The receivers called in by the company's directors last week are confident they can sell it as a going concern. Some 30 companies and individuals have expressed an interest in buying them up, and serious negotiations are proceeding with two of these.

On the phone and at the weekend's Alternative Book Fair, a thousand and one off-the-record explanations have been offered for Pluto's eventual downfall: they didn't cultivate loyal authors; they spent too much money on designer door handles for their offices; they 'moved off into strange areas like ecology and poetry'; they 'surrounded themselves with yes people'; they didn't promote books properly; they published too many boring books by academics; they published too many ephemeral books by journalists.

Apart from the general doldrums in the book business, the collapse seems to have been the result of a straightforward case of expanding on too narrow a capital base. Pluto tried to double the size of its list, hoping thereby to reduce marginal costs and make better use of its hard-won media contacts. It aimed to finance the expansion using injections of liquidity from the Greater London Enterprise Board and the Rowntree Trust, but the deals took time to sew up and the money came in too late. Accounts supplied by the receiver show a gradual increase in turnover to around £75,000, but the costs of sales not being brought under control. Result: the company continued to trade at a loss (£54,000 in the first half of this year) and eat into its reserves.

During its 16 years the company and its leading figures underwent significant political shifts. When Richard Kuper founded Pluto he was on the national committee of the International Socialists (which later became the Socialist Workers' Party). Michael Kidron, who joined later, was staunchly IS, and edited the Party's newspaper for a time. Nina Kidron, who eventually became Pluto's driving force, was closely connected, but never a member. In the mid and late '70s, they all moved away. Simultaneously they developed ambitions to run what was effectively a mainstream publisher with a left-wing list. They tried to appeal to a broad left, but at a time when the left was splitting. And they tried to move to the right in the hope of pulling people to the left, but at at time when the world at large was moving right.

In the end they fell between too many stools: the SWP faithful thought they had sold out; but provincial booksellers still thought of them as dangerous left-wing lunatics. They expanded their list; but then swamped radical booksellers with more titles than they could sell. They tried to publish more racy, up-to-the-minute 'issue' books; but found themselves with titles which rapidly became out of date. And they never had a stroke of luck like owning the rights to Colin MacInnes or *The Color Purple*. They are most likely to be remembered, not for their recent ventures into crime novels and thrillers, but for their early successes like *The Employers' Offensive* and *Hazards of Work*, with which they made their reputation.

Kuper says that if he had his time again, he'd 'go for decent books saying something, not "so what?" books'. He says his days with Pluto are at an end: 'I must accept that my contribution has not been successful. But the left as a whole desperately needs something like this to survive.'

**Jolyon Jenkins**

# Marx: Chic by jowl

'POST-CLASS politics' if we're to believe Raphael Samuel's ringing denunciation of *Marxism Today*'s 'project' in October's *New Socialist*, had an outing in ye Old Cheshire Cheese, Fleet St, this Tuesday (23 Sept). *MT* editor Martin Jacques flanked by Bea Campbell of *City Limits* and Ken Livingstone of no fixed present abode launched the biggest ever (64pp) and new-designed October issue. Campbell has the first ever regular opinion column to be run by *MT* and Ken . . . well, Ken's a friend and *didn't* the cameras flash when he said his few words.

'We're looking for another upward twist in our circulation', said Jacques and outlined the success story to date — on which the *NS*'s own sororal and fraternal greetings and congratulations. An eccentric audience of left insiders and right outsiders, from Duncan Campbell erstwhile of *City Limits* to the *Daily Telegraph*'s person, heard him tabulate a circulation rise from 4,000 in 1978 to 14,000 today and in ad revenue from £5,000 to £80,000. And a lift from 1½ staff to six. Readership is 80 per cent under 40, 80 per cent male, 63 per cent Labour Party members. Nearly half the readership has been acquired in the last two years.

The designer of the new look, Keith Ablitt, was once art editor of *Vogue* so there was much chaff about style and Sarah Mower's fashion article on 'conservative chic' which (her own quote from *Vogue*) allows 'a new establishment class values and security'. (See, Samuel, *MT* isn't post-class politics at all.) The left on Tuesday as represented by Jacques was in brilliant green socks and shirt and US pro golfer's tartan trousers; by Bea Campbell in gleaming white slacks and shirt, black belt and silver and black open-toe shoes; by Ken in sand-coloured co-ordinates to which he proudly drew his audience's attention.

The nub of the press conference, so far as it rose above the inanities of any such occasion — Ken twice told us that he's now 41 years old — was the ludicrously opposed perspectives of the hacks' questioning. 'Who owns you?' demanded a clipped female voice. 'We're published and owned by the Communist party but we're a discussion *not* a policy magazine,' said Jacques. You could feel the right-wing minds present saying to themselves 'thought so, it's just the same old red revolution in couture clothing'. Meanwhile the lefties entered zestfully into the question of whether *MT* has sold out, is selling out, and will continue to sell out (the cause, that is, not copies).

Angelic in her white robes, Bea softly chided the left's will to be forever finding 'traitors'. Jacques defended his editorship (1977 onwards) with 'the left can only develop and extend its influence if it's prepared to look beyond itself. . . unlike the predominant left tradition of journalism ours is an attempt to be about the *world*'. Ken said, well Ken said he'd sent his safari jacket to Madame Tussaud's and then, returning to frivolities, 'we aren't going to get socialism next week, that thought's still a breathtaking breakthrough for much of the left. The *MT* approach is vital as Britain enters the coming Kinnockian predominance' — which last he managed to articulate without a stumble.

**Andrew Lumsden**

# Ian MacGregor: outsider with a thin skin

IAN MACGREGOR's memoirs are published next week (the *NS* will have full coverage). The excerpt published in the *Sunday Times* earlier this week shows a man deeply unforgiving and settled in his dislikes, certain he was right and proud of his own prescience in foreseeing the strike and laying down the tactical framework for it.

Peter Walker is seen as interfering and 'agonising' (Walker thought MacGregor eccentric in judgement and disastrous in presentation); the late Geoff Kirk, the NCB Director of Information, was regarded with huge distrust by MacGregor *because* he had a good relationship with the media; Ned Smith, the Industrial Relations Director, was seen as arrogant and condescending. They and others in the Board had, MacGregor writes, 'a profound distaste for an outsider so clearly bent on bringing about change in the comfortable culture of their well-ordered world'.

MacGregor was wrong about that: though the senior management did feel distrustful, they had no real expectation that their new chairman would be 'one of them' and were realistic enought to know they had to obey a new boss strongly backed by government. But he seemed unable to tolerate disagreement.

Yet he had a thin skin, for all that. He hated confronting people (his deputy, James Cowan, did the disciplining and the firing) and he hated rows: when angered, he would quickly shake with rage, and controlled it by clamming up and folding his arms in silence. When Walker complained last Sunday that MacGregor never voiced his criticisms to Walker's face, the charge rings true.

He was also less consistent than it seems likely he will give himself credit for. Most associates, even those who admire him (and many do) testify to a curious indecisiveness, to a man whose strength was firing off ideas rather than laying down lines and objectives. In the early part of the strike, he very quickly dropped most of the terms of the agreement he wanted with the unions and which he had termed 'imperative' — such as an explicit agreement to close uneconomic pits — in favour of formulae so vaguely worded that Smith and others at the Board, whom he later termed as virtual fifth columnists, thought he was selling the pass.

But he won, and it is the victors who make history.

**John Lloyd**



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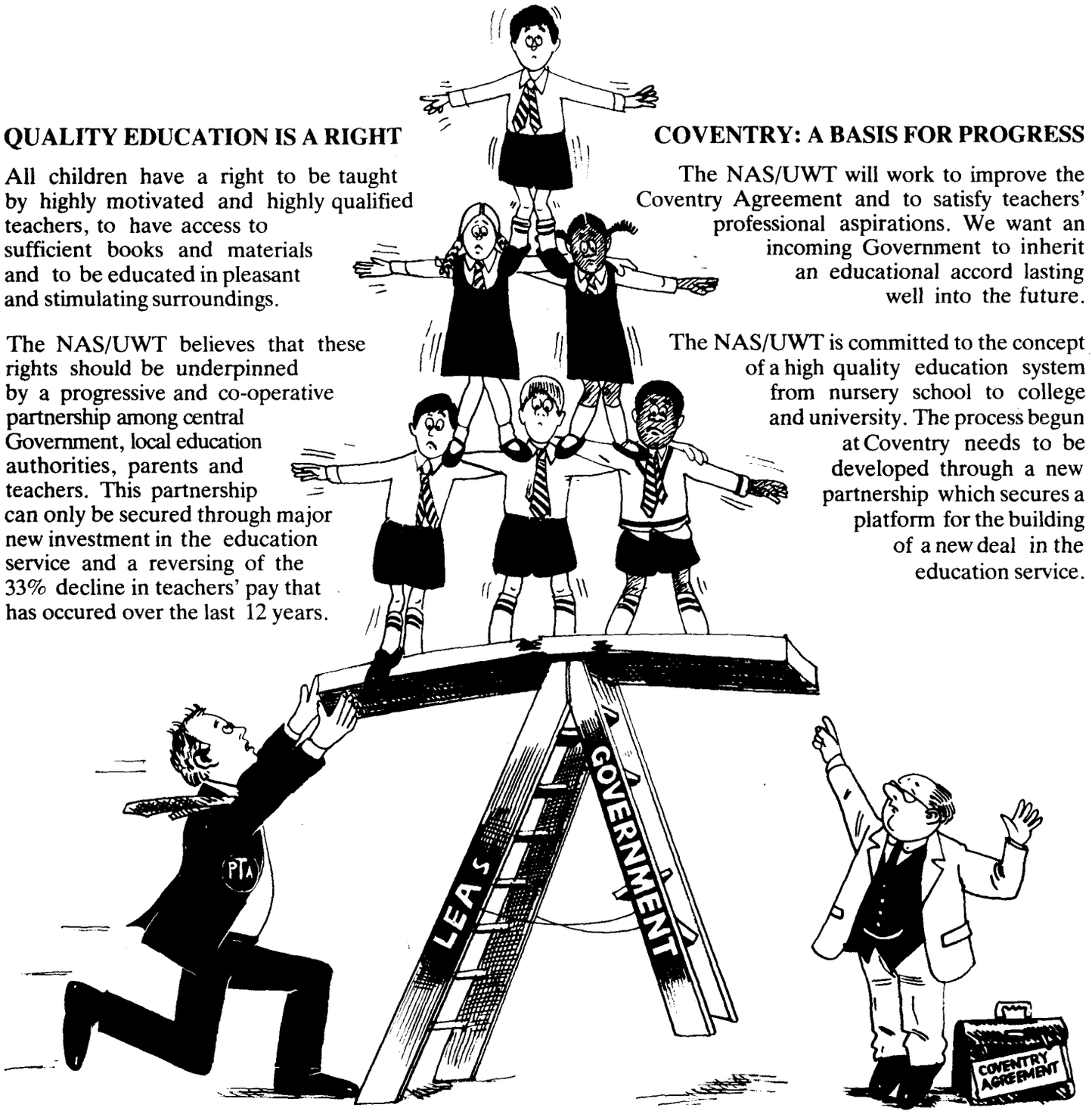


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# Special roundup: CRIES OF RAGE ABOUT TOPLIS

## MICHAEL LEAPMAN

SO PERCY Toplis finally got his come-uppance last Sunday. As the monocled mutineer lay on that Cumbrian road, tomato ketchup oozing from a deadly hole in his shirt, one viewer at least will have identified with him. Alasdair Milne, the hapless director-general of the BBC, could be forgiven for feeling that it was he, not our lovable World War I anti-hero, who was being hounded remorselessly by a vindictive Establishment.

Meanwhile the real Toplis, surveying the carnage from that other home fit for heroes, will have allowed himself a contented smile. Although his obstinate defiance of authority may have failed at the time to cause any terminal damage to the ruling class, 70 years later its aftermath was provoking a satisfying measure of apoplexy.

The storm over *The Monocled Mutineer* is the most ludicrous ever to have burst over the BBC. As Britain's only publicly-owned medium of popular information, the corporation has always been vulnerable to charges of bias and distortion from parties anxious that their own prejudices should not be challenged. Yet Milne and his colleagues could scarcely have anticipated the startling consequence of commissioning a dramatisation of a book that had been published eight years ago without many of us noticing it. How could they guess that they would be accused of disseminating foul Bolshevik propaganda; of being infiltrated by pinkos bent on destroying everything true Brits hold dear — like the reputations of dead generals and the conviction that our lads in the trenches submitted to humiliation, inhuman conditions and inept leadership with a smile on their lips and joy in their hearts?

That the BBC did not foresee the row was clear from the over-the-top advance publicity they gave to the four-part series. At last month's Edinburgh TV Festival, for example, a press officer was deputed to encourage journalists to attend a special screening. Those who forwent the pleasure were treated to rave reviews by BBC folk at the bar afterwards. We were certainly given to believe that the events related in the series were true. Indeed in last Monday's *Guardian* William Allison, one of the co-authors of the original book, made the case convincingly that Toplis *did* play a leading role in the Etaples mutiny, despite claims by other historians that there is no evidence he was 'within a hundred miles' of the place.

WHAT HAPPENED between the advance ballyhoo and the broadcast of the first episode was the unfortunate death of Stuart Young, the BBC chairman, and the consequent need to find a replacement. It came at a time when those on the right who wanted to bring the BBC to heel had been thwarted by the Peacock Committee's rejection of schemes to force advertising on the corporation. Here was a providential chance to appoint a strong-arm chairman who would flush out the pinkos and restore decency and order to an outfit that had slipped out of control. Young himself had been earmarked for that role, but as Milne arrogantly stressed in the various tributes he paid after his death, the Finchley accountant's approach was coloured by his awe at being in charge of such a wonderful institution. Like several before him, he had been rendered ineffective by a subtly administered overdose of *esprit de corporation*.

In their bid to manipulate Mrs Thatcher into choosing a proper toughie this time, the right grabbed the first weapon to hand, Percy Toplis. The suggestion that *Monocled Mutineer* was deliberate left-wing disinformation came first from the *Daily Mail*, which also made the link between the programme and the choice of a new chairman to stamp out such outrages. Soon the rest of the Tory press followed suit, notably *The Spectator*, where a hysterical Paul Johnson accused the Beeb of raping truth for ideological purposes.

Nobody has made it clear precisely how a strong chairman would be able to contain the Red menace. The board do not view programmes in advance, except in especially contentious cases like last year's *Real Lives* fiasco. Even if a new chairman were to insist on reversing this tradition it would be physically impossible for him to monitor the BBC's entire output with a view to exercising prior restraint. The board do make senior appointments, but it would take years to exert any real influence on the political outlook of the management by that route.

The furore must have done wonders for the show's ratings but I suspect it will not have the desired effect on Mrs Thatcher's choice of a chairman. Lord King now seems to have snatched from the ring the hat he so carefully tossed there and Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary, is said to be urging the appointment of someone who will work with the BBC management rather than against them. In the run-up to an election the Prime Minister may calculate that the people who would be most impressed by a hard-line chairman are unshakeable Tory voters anyway. A pity, though, that Field Marshal Haig is unavailable. □

## NICOLAS WALTER

THE CASE of *The Monocled Mutineer* raises important issues which haven't yet been treated seriously enough in the left-wing press, including the *New Statesman*.

Denis Campbell (*NS* 19 September) claims that the controversy about the television series 'is born of right-wing malice out of BBC bungling', that neither Alan Bleasdale (the author) nor Julian Putkowski (the historical consultants) believed it was anything more than 'a cracking good yarn', and that claims of anything more came only from 'BBC publicity'.

This isn't good enough. Claims for historical authenticity were made not just in press releases but in serious articles by D. A. N. Jones in the *Radio Times* (30 August-5 September) and by Paul Kerr and David Housham in the *Listener* (28 August), and also by William Allison and John Fairley in the book *The Monocled Mutineer* (1978) on which the television series is based.

Moreover, according to the interview with Ian Williams (*NS* 5 September), Bleasdale is 'unfazed by academic doubts about the authenticity of the Toplis tales', and argues: 'I've written about the truth, not necessarily the facts. The truth is more important . . . The story's true, not factual.'

Is it merely 'right-wing malice' or 'academic' anxiety to worry about such an attempt to distinguish between facts and truth, and to discriminate against the former in favour of the latter? Surely the *truth* about the real person called Percy Toplis, so far as it can be known, may be derived only from the *facts* about him, so far as they can be found. Any addition to or subtraction from the facts may make the story more interesting or entertaining or exciting or amusing or

*'The revolution must have started. Even the armchair socialists are out on the streets'*



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convincing or moving, but can't make it more *true*. On the contrary, it can only make it *less* true; so it would be more accurate to say that in this case the story is *untrue*, not factual.

The book of *The Monocled Mutineer* contains many details presented as facts about Toplis in particular and First World War mutinies in general, with little serious attempt to supply the sort of references which would give them authenticity. The television script of *The Monocled Mutineer*, which has also been published as a book, contains many more details presented not as facts but as elements in a story which is claimed to be the truth yet which has no authority other than the original book and Bleasdale's personal feelings about romantic socialism in general and the First World War in particular (the latter deriving from family memories). In one instance, a real fact such as Victor Sylvester's genuine experience of being a member of a firing squad shooting a soldier for cowardice is transferred to Percy Toplis's imaginary experience of being a medical orderly on such an occasion.

BUT THE TRUTH is indeed important, and a truth about Sylvester isn't also a truth about Toplis. Comment is free, but facts are sacred; and to present false facts as somehow more true than real facts is to say the thing which is not, to tell not some kind of truth but some kind of lie. One of the few certain facts about Toplis is that there are few certain facts about Toplis, and in this situation no kind of truth can be reached by combining plausible reconstruction of real events with complete invention of non-events. Poor Percy Toplis, having been destroyed by his world of crime and war, has to be destroyed again by our world of media and myth.

For what appears in both the book and the television script is a myth — what Plato called a 'noble lie' and the Situationists call a 'spectacle', being techniques used by people in power (whether guardians of the state or controllers of the media) to keep their power. *The Monocled Mutineer* is a myth about Toplis and the Etaples mutiny of 1917, designed to balance all the old myths about heroes and battles, and to convey a special argument about the First World War and socialism. Even if we accept the argument (as I do, more or less), we should surely reject this way of presenting it, because it actually amounts to telling lies to comrades.

But of course this sort of thing is 'good television' — indeed it is 'one of the best things on television', according to Campbell — and of course the book is 'good journalism': because they satisfy the creators and stimulate the consumers, and make everyone feel nice and warm. But I say that it is bad history, bad politics, and bad morality. There has been plenty of good literature about war and opposition to war — poems (*The Iliad*), plays (*Lysistrata*), novels (*War and Peace*), films (*All Quiet on the Western Front*) — but as soon as we pretend that it is somehow more true than truth we are in danger.

The danger is the sin of political onanism — getting excited by our own propaganda. There are already too many myths on the left as well as on the right — about revolution (English and American, French and Russian, Chinese and Cuban) and about individuals (Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, Luxemburg and Guevara) — and we don't need a new myth about an imaginary leader of a semi-imaginary movement.

We must learn to distinguish between myths and truth and to discriminate in favour of the latter. *The Monocled Mutineer* may be good journalism or good television, but it doesn't tell the truth about Percy Toplis or the Etaples mutiny or the First World War or anything else. Let us enjoy it, but let us not take it seriously. Let us instead have the real facts about the mutinies and other forms of resistance in the First World War. Wouldn't that be a truth worth having? □

## DOUGLAS GILL

ON 5 SEPTEMBER 1917, a few days before the outbreak of trouble at Etaples, several hundred Labour Corps troops stationed near Calais refused to do their duty, and said they would not work. Next day they persisted in this, the first major mutiny to beset the British Expeditionary Force.

Arrests? Court martial? They 'benefited' from nothing of the kind. A stern policy was put into effect: 'shoot those who are temporarily out of hand'. Twenty-three men died, 24 were wounded, when the rest 'went to work without further trouble'.

In succeeding weeks, disturbances in the Labour Corps — many of whose members were Chinese and black soldiers from the colonies — continued, and were met by hails of bullets. Scores, if not hundreds, perished in this way.

No fighting soldiers at Etaples a few days later faced measures such as these. One man died, of course — Corporal William Wood, Gordon Highlanders, caught by a stray pistol shot as the mutiny broke out. And some men were arrested. One of them, Corporal Jesse Short, another Scotsman, was court-martialled and shot. But the authorities acted with restraint as they re-asserted their control.

One way or another, the mutinies of 1917 were effectively crushed. Even so the Adjutant General was left with a dilemma. He was responsible for discipline throughout the BEF. What if unrest were to break out once again? Should he put on his velvet gloves, as had happened at Etaples? Or were mass shootings a surer way of suppressing discontent? By Christmas 1917, the advocates of shootings were beginning to lose ground. 'Disturbances', wrote a colonel, 'can, of course, be quelled by drastic measures . . . but if this procedure be solely relied on, further troubles might break out'.

During 1918, this more sophisticated policy increasingly gained sway. Brigadier-General John Wroughton, of the Adjutant General's department, emerged as the army's chief agent in quashing discontent. In September 1917 he had visited Etaples at the height of the unrest. In 1918, his was the guiding hand in dealing with a strike among German prisoners of war; in dealing with sporadic but continuing disturbances among infantrymen passing through Calais; with a stoppage of work at Le Havre base; and with a strike in the Tank Corps workshops, when 'practically the whole of the workshops establishment' was put under arrest.

Wroughton's handling of the strike at Calais base, in January 1919, marked the high point in his career.

THIS GREAT STRIKE, by its place and timing, put the army under strain. The BEF's main supply line ran straight through Calais docks. When Wroughton reached Calais on Tuesday 29 January he found that 'all work was stopped and the town picketed by strikers'. The strike was one of sympathy, and concerned the arrest, while delivering a 'seditious' speech to an assembly of soldiers, of Private John Pantling, Army Ordnance Corps. The Ordnance men came out, and were followed by men of the Army Service Corps, the Royal Engineers, and other units in the town.

Wroughton's plan was clever. He ordered the release of Private Pantling, and convinced many of the strikers that they should now return to work. Secretly, a brigade of loyal soldiers was drawing closer to the town.

The scheme was ingenious, but was overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the problems with which the army was beset. Five thousand infantrymen, stranded in Calais when the trains stopped running, refused orders and asked to be sent home. Two quite separate mutinies thus developed in Calais. With one, Wroughton continued his negotiations; but the other, cowed by further infantry divisions, was surrounded and put down.

In August 1914, men from the industrial working class had flocked to enlist. Millions had joined up, the majority without threat of compulsion, as simple volunteers. Four years later, their mood had greatly changed. In France, England, the Near and Middle East, in India and Russia, British soldiers held meetings, marches, and even burned down their stores. They did this, partly, because they wanted to get out. But they did it, also, because they sought to cast off the discipline — the social relations, in fact — of an army which they had now come to abhor. □

*Douglas Gill is the author with Gloden Dallas of* The Unknown Army *(Verso, £5.95).*


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# VATICAN SEX CLAMPS

**Just when Rome seemed able to tolerate liberal sexual ethics, along came 'creeping infallibilism' and a nasty moral backlash. TERRY TASTARD reports**

THERE IS GROWING alarm among progressive Catholics as they realise that there are powerful forces in the Vatican determined to reimpose a stamp of uniformity in Catholic thinking. In recent developments a priest in the United States was ordered to destroy controversial research material, church bookshops in Dublin were told to stop selling a booklet on homosexuality written by a priest, and British theologians have complained that debate is being stifled.

Many observers attribute the developing pattern of restriction to the influence of German cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who runs the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It is this body which oversees the purity of Catholic teaching and which imposed a year's silence on the Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff. At that time Ratzinger was cracking down on theologians who used marxist concepts to analyse society. Now it seems as if he is turning his attention from Latin America to the church in western nations.

The situation of western Catholics arguing with the Vatican over sexual ethics may, at first, seem very different from the situation of Catholics trying to practice liberation theology in Asia, or Latin America. Yet there is one important similarity. Liberation theology insists that those in power in the church must learn from the experiences of ordinary people. It is precisely this that is at stake in the present struggle within the Catholic Church over sexual ethics. Can the church learn from its members? Or does all influence flow from the top downwards?

This is the significance of the reappearance of the debate on contraception. Until recently it seemed that the debate on contraception was at an end, since most Catholics no longer believed that contraception was wrong. During the last decade it has been increasingly said that the consensus of believers is an important element in defining what the church believes. Now, with Rome swinging back to a monolithic model, this evolution towards a more open church is in jeopardy.

Strictly speaking the pope is said by Catholics to be infallible only in certain tightly-defined circumstances. But with the limitation of debate there are more and more signs of what is sometimes called 'creeping infallibilism' — the insistence that the views of the pope and his staff on many issues must not be challenged. When Fr Charles Curran, a distinguished American priest, argued that the ethical matters he wrote about did not come under the infallible teaching of the pope, Ratzinger replied that the general teaching of the pope and bishops was to be received with 'submission of intellect and will'.

## New tough line

It seems that the Vatican's new tough line is hitting the United States the hardest. Probably the most bizarre case is that of a Jesuit theologian in California, Terrence Sweeney, who sent a questionnaire to the 122 cardinals around the world, and to the 312 Catholic bishops in the United States. He asked them if they thought that priests should be allowed to marry, and the priesthood be opened to women.

Dr Sweeney had received replies from half the bishops and 10 cardinals when his superiors last month relayed a command from Rome: he was to abandon and destroy his survey, or leave the Jesuits. The Vatican was, it seems, alarmed at what his survey might reveal. He said that he would resign rather than submit to 'authority destructive of the very foundations of the church, and of religious and academic freedom'.

The Archbishop of Seattle, Raymond Hunthausen — in charge of over 350,000 Catholics — has also run into trouble. The US Navy's Trident submarine base at Bangor is in his diocese, and the archbishop became well known in the United States for outspoken criticism of his country's nuclear defence policies. He withheld half his taxes in protest against arms expenditure.

Conservative Catholics sent complaints about him to Rome, citing alleged failures on his part to present true Catholic teaching about marriage, sexual morality and other issues. He was particularly attacked for allowing a gay Catholic group to hold a service in Seattle cathedral during their annual convention.

Rome launched a lengthy investigation of Hunthausen which produced little of substance. Even so, an auxiliary (assistant) bishop named Donald Wuerl was sent from Rome, and it emerged this summer that Hunthausen has been stripped by Rome of certain areas of responsibility which have been handed to Wuerl.

Such a move is believed to be unprecedented and amounts to a public humiliation of one of the American Catholic Church's best-known anti-nuclear campaigners. Some Catholics point out the irony of their strongly 'pro-life' church hamstringing a leader strongly opposed to mass human destruction. Many believe that Hunthausen's critics were motivated by dislike of his political stance rather than by doctrinal issues.

ROME SEEMS to be particularly anxious to prevent any liberalising of Catholic attitudes towards sexuality. It has called in a sex education textbook used in more than one third of US dioceses, after complaints that it provided detailed descriptions of sexual

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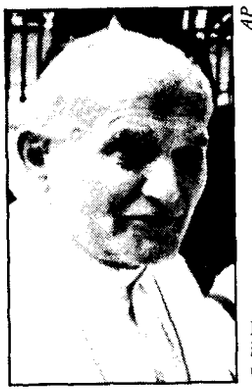
organs and processes without giving proper moral guidance. Cardinal Edouard Gagnon in Rome called the book 'a travesty of sex education'. The book had been approved by the Archbishop of Dubuque, Daniel Kucera, who was amazed at the Vatican line.

Changing attitudes to homosexuality are a particularly sensitive area. Hunthausen was told by the Vatican that ministry to gay people was one of the areas that he must in future leave to Wuerl. Fr Curran, who had written that there is nothing wrong with stable, loving gay relationships, was already under fire for his qualified approval of contraception and remarriage of divorcees, but it was reportedly his views on gay relationships that were the 'last straw' for the Vatican. On their instructions he was sacked on 10 July from his post as professor of moral theology at the Catholic University in Washington.

Meanwhile in Ireland the Archbishop of Dublin, Kevin McNamara, seems to have had his antennae tuned to Vatican sensibilities in such matters: last month he instructed church-run bookshops to withdraw a booklet, 'Understanding the Homosexual', written by local priest Raphael Gallagher. A mild and cautiously-written work, it called for an end to prejudice against gay people and argued that Catholic thinking about homosexuality had been led astray by a stress on sex as designed for procreation. Catholics, he said, should be moving away 'from a procreational view of sexuality to a more personalised and relational one'.

Similar views appeared in Britain, in a controversial article in *The Times* of 30 August, written by Kevin Kelly, a Catholic priest teaching in Birmingham. In the article he explained that issues of sexual ethics had to be 'faced honestly' by those who, like Curran and himself, were involved in teaching moral theology. Blanket condemnations of certain sexual acts were no longer tenable. Each person's circumstances had to be taken into account — an approach, he said, approved by the Second Vatican Council and which had 'helped the church to become more person-centred and thus to bring comfort and healing to many people who are facing difficult personal situations.'



AP

**Pope John Paul II: infallible or just unchallengeable?**

Applying this approach, Kelly argued that contraception could be an expression of love and mutual care, and that the church should be helping, not condemning those who after divorce find new life in a second marriage. And homosexuality, he said, 'does not automatically bring with it a vocation to celibacy'. In denying that same-sex relationships could be 'lives of faithful love' the church might be implicitly encouraging promiscuity and thus the spread of Aids.

KELLY'S ARTICLE was swiftly condemned by the bishops of Northampton and Aberdeen. It has created a stir among British Catholics, not only because of its contents but also because it comes at a time when liberal-minded Catholics would be well-advised to keep their heads below the parapet.

However, it is significant that this is precisely what they are not doing. Earlier this month, 29 Catholic theologians signed a statement which was sent to the heads of the Catholic Church in England and Scotland, complaining that actions such as those against Curran were stifling the legitimate exercise of free theological debate. One of those present at the debate which produced the statement told me that while they were motivated by a sense of the injustice done to Curran, there was also concern not to allow the Catholic authorities to pick off dissident theologians one by one.

For Catholics determined to resist this trend there is more bad news. Recently the pope announced that Ratzinger is to head a working party of 12 which will prepare a 'universal catechism'. This book is intended to provide clear teaching on faith and morals and to end 'erroneous interpretations' of these within the church. Catholics had better take their sea-sickness pills: it looks as if the barque of Peter is in for some stormy waters. □

*Terry Tastard is a member of an Anglican religious order and a writer on religious affairs.*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# PROBLEMS OF A PARTY WITHOUT POLITICS

Left: party co-chair, Jo Robbins. Right: Lee Williams — 'contesting elections is a waste of time'

**As the traditional parties go Green, the Green Party itself is faced with an acute identity crisis. SARAH BENTON reports on their dilemmas**

BRITAIN'S GREEN PARTY was pleased that its decision to field 150 candidates at the next general election and, in particular, to contest the 'nuclear seats' was widely reported in the press. It was equally pleased that the belief of one of its most senior members that the current structure of the party must confine it to the fringe of politics was not.

It is in the nature of the Green Party, meeting at Newcastle for its three-day annual conference last weekend, that members voted not to discuss in conference the matter they were obsessively discussing in the spaces outside. While the dispute over what sort of party the Greens should be drew a record 341 members to attend conference (any member can turn up) not one of the motions dealing with it was debated. 'We discussed it all the way back on the coach' said one member 'and decided it really wasn't important.'

The conflict is a familiar one for anyone involved in the radical wing of politics. On the one hand there is the utopian or libertarian or direct action tendency which wants the party to be the living embodiment of its democratic ideals and which tends to put moral imperatives before political strategy. On the other there is the 'lawyers' tendency, to borrow the name of the archetypal profession, which believes political change can only come about through adopting the conventions of professional politics. In the West German Green Party the two tendencies are called the *fundis* and the *realos*.

Among Britain's Greens, the conflict is peculiarly hard to resolve because of the prevailing ethos of harmony at all costs. The determination to avoid political dispute is seen by many members as the feature that gives them a distinct identity and thus justifies their existence as a separate party competing in the electoral market. As other parties recognise the need to have some policy on the environment and 'steal' the colour green, so the Green Party's need to hold to a distinct identity becomes more acute.

## Expanding membership

It is also peculiarly difficult for British Greens because since their formation as the People's Party in 1974, they have had two name changes and notable changes in political direction and membership. From those early days as a tiny group preoccupied with survival and *lebensraum* it has become a party of 5,800 members with a prevailing ethos of utopian radicalism. Its most consistent features have been increasing membership — up 16 per cent this year — its global outlook and its commitment to standing in elections as an independent party.

Even this last feature is now under attack from the new wave of members washed in by the success of the German Greens, of Greenham feminism and, most recently, the Chernobyl disaster. As Lee Williams, one of the new wave said, 'contesting elections is a waste of time'. The party would do better to spend the money on 'educating people away from Westminster' into the real political alternative. 'We are the real radicals, the revolution belongs to us.' Applause.

IT IS JUST this sort of thing which appals Jonathan Tyler, a transport planner, long-standing member of the party and part-author of the dispute which had members on both sides threatening to leave the party if the other side triumphed at conference (*see box:* the Maingreen row). Tyler wrote the party's original constitution in 1977. By 1982 the party was, in his view, in serious organisational difficulties. From then until last April he beavered away with POWG, the Party Organisation Working Group, to devise new structures for the party: he wanted the party to adopt the broad forms of professional organisation.

At their annual conference in Malvern last spring (Greens have two national conferences a year) POWG produced its proposals for a two-tier central leadership — a small executive group, a larger Party Council to discuss policy, leaving local parties to form whatever sort of regional links they thought most apt. Tyler also wanted a system of electing people specifically for their qualities as public spokespersons — or leaders.

The proposals got a majority vote, but not the required two-thirds majority, and so they fell. Three years of work and positively tonnes of recycled paper into the dustbin of failed constitutional reforms.

Though it has been hard to clothe the spirit of reform in appropriate constitutional detail, the spirit still thrives in the strong antipathy to central leadership. More importantly, an informal network of about 80 people, meeting several times a year under the name OWOW (Other Ways of Working) has been discussing since 1984 how to make conference procedure more friendly and democratic.

Their successful proposals are the most striking evidence to the outsider of the Greens' distinct character. It was not so much the notice pointing you to the meditation room or the minute's 'atunement' before each plenary session. It was that all the conventional forms of full-scale political debate and conflict have been devolved out of existence. This year, instead of sitting in rows, members were seated round large square tables, each with a 'facilitator' to explain the proceedings.

When there are plenary sessions, they are

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George Oldham

chaired by at least two people (the party itself has three co-chairs, all of them women this year). Drilled in the need not to dominate proceedings with long, boring speeches, members make political points in two or three clipped sentences and sit down.

## Cute terminology

Ecological imagery goes further still. The session for questioning Party Council members is cutely called the coconut shy (they sit in a semi-circle at the front to have questions hurled at them). Even the most conservative members share in the healthy eating habits — Clive Lord, the most long-standing member delicately munches slices of raw carrot as he walks and talks. There were no catering facilities at the conference because Trust House Forte, the contractor at Newcastle's Civic Centre, charged a higher price for vegetarian meals than meaty ones. And the sign of OWOW's latest innovation is the rabbit: 'rabbit rabbit rabbit' reads an invitation to the lonely and bewildered to come to their 'Talking Shop', a corner table adorned with a large stuffed rabbit.

CLEARLY, GREENS want to feel at one with the world. But what do they actually believe? The only new policies reached this conference were approval of gay rights and limited trade union rights. Ekins presented the problem in his paper:

> Green ideology remains alarmingly unfocused and serious discussion about it remains rare. What for example are green social relations of production? Who owns the means of production in a green society? Are we into popular capitalism, local socialism or a mixture of the two? How do you keep popular capitalism small-scale and participatory or curb what Marx analysed as capital's inevitable tendency to accumulation and concentration. How do you stop local socialism getting inflexibly and insensitively bureaucratic? What is the role of markets in the green economy?
>
> How many Green Party members can answer these questions convincingly?

Not Peter Lang, Acting Press Officer and fierce opponent of Maingreen for one. He knows who should own and control industry, but cheerfully admits that 'they haven't yet got round' to discussing how you transfer ownership of the means of production into the workers' hands through consensus, or control of the same into the hands of 'all those affected' by a company by wholly harmonious means.

The Greens of today, with more members in cities than the countryside, are less vulnerable to the central criticism made by socialist Joe Weston in *Red and Green*: 'The principal concern of modern environmentalism is not the fact that people die as a result of environmental problems but the effect that human activity has on the Earth's ecology.'

It is true that, listening to Green talk, you can discern a party which sees itself as the steward of the earth's natural resource rather than, as with social democracy, of human beings. But there are others, like the passionate anti Maingreen Joe Steranka who speaks with humanitarian vigour of the threats of the radioactive cloud, a 'fascist government' and dying children. And Jonathan Tyler, of the old school, worried that concern for human rights was excluding classic policies about overpopulation.

Here we come to the last Green dilemma which the Maingreen group seems unlikely to resolve. The determination to avoid 'class politics' and political conflict at all costs in a focus on the politically neutral environment is their raison d'etre as a party. Otherwise, they might as well be a serious pressure group. That very fact makes them attractice to refugees from the existing parties in Britain. There are two consequences. The first is the resolute dislike of the sort of organisational procedure that gives a party shape and direction. The second is a suffocating silence on the political conflicts which are almost impossible to resolve without recourse to a language of class and, in the end, a political language. To the question: 'What is the cause of the threats to the world's resources' George Prall, the Greens' first District Councillor, answers simply 'human greed'. Multinational companies and the individual consumer hold, in his view, equal moral responsibility. Politics doesn't come into it.

When Ian Smith was chosen as the Green parliamentary candidate for Midlothian he promptly wrote to the Scottish NUM explaining they should support him because the Greens were unequivocally against nuclear power. Eric Clarke wrote back saying support for Labour had never been stronger, for they were unequivocally pro-working class. What's more, the NUM said to Smith, the Labour Party were with us in the miners' strike and you weren't. What had the Greens done in the miners' strike? 'I gave them an old cooker,' Smith said. □

## Maingreen row

In April this year, after the Malvern conference rejected reforms that would have made the party more professional, a group of reform supporters met to decide how they could now get what they wanted. They came up with idea of Maingreen. Maingreen was to be a forum of like-minded Greens, selected by the founding group. It would aim to win control of Party Council.

On 7 April, Paul Ekins, the well-known ex-secretary of the Ecology Party, and Jonathan Tyler, sent out papers to a group of sympathisers. The papers were the basis for a meeting to be held on 10 May to set up Maingreen. They were sent to, among others, co-chair Jo Robbins, who showed them to colleagues on the Party Council.

They reacted angrily. Ten of them called an emergency Party Council for 10 May — the day of the inaugural Maingreen meeting. The papers gave offence both in how they characterised existing party membership and what should be done about it. Jonathan Tyler's paper pointed to 'a disproportionate representation of people who have never been part of or who have opted out of the formal economy'.

But it was Paul Ekins' paper which caused most offence. He hinged it round two axioms: organisation is 90 per cent of politics; and the central importance of image. He identified the party's image problem in one simple public face: Sid Rawle. Sid is a full-time earthy anarchist, who causes equal despair to pragmatic CND organisers as to the Green Party but delight to press photographers. Ekins argued that as long as his image dominated the Green Party, it would remain marginal.

Although there is considerable private sympathy for this view among the Greens, Maingreen found ranged up against them those who objected to being left out, those who were against the formation of factions as undemocratic and those who objected to the whole political direction of the argument. But several Maingreen supporters have been voted onto Party Council. ●


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# THE SELECT VS. THE UNIVERSAL: THE SDP APPROACH TO WELFARE

DICK TAVERNE

BOTH THE LABOUR Party and the SDP aim to redistribute wealth and attack poverty. Their respective proposals have certain common features: both would abolish the anachronism of the married man's allowance, increase child benefits and pensions, abolish higher rate mortgage relief, make tax allowances worth the same to all taxpayers and reintroduce a comprehensive tax on capital transfers. But there the similarity ends.

Detailed comment on Labour's proposals is not yet possible, because we do not know how Labour's spending plans will be financed. To state, as Roy Hattersley does, that only those earning above £27,500 will pay is clearly nonsense.

Enough, however, has emerged from previous statements to reveal the main features of Labour's approach. Labour will seek to eliminate the means-tested benefits and strengthen the universal ones. Supplementary Benefit will in time be replaced by some sort of basic income scheme. Those at work will get bigger child benefit, which remains for the time being untaxed; there will be a minimum wage; National Insurance will be retained but income tax become graduated, starting at 15 per cent and then rising to 30, 45, 60 and possibly 75 per cent. At that stage child benefit will become taxable.

The SDP by contrast places the emphasis on selective benefits. It also proposes a much more radical reform of the whole tax and benefit structure, by scrapping the National Insurance system entirely and merging the administration of tax and benefits.

THE ARGUMENTS for Labour's universalist approach are at first sight powerful ones. As Professor Titmuss once said, benefits and services confined to the poor tend to be poor benefits and services. We want to avoid a society divided between benefit recipients, who are subjected to means tests, and the rest who resentfully pay for these benefits. Present means-tested benefits also have the disadvantage that you have to apply for them and many people, well over a million, do not. Finally, benefits which are withdrawn as income rises lead to high implicit marginal rates of tax when the loss of benefits and the liability to tax are added together.

*But there is one overwhelming objection to universal benefits: the expense.* The reason why the Beveridge design never worked was that no government was ever willing to raise taxes high enough to make it work. Nor is there any reason to believe that they ever will. Reliance on universal benefits faces all governments with the dilemma that either the benefits are kept too low to give the help that is needed, or their cost becomes astronomical. If the primary aim is the relief of poverty, a selective approach becomes imperative. Would it were not so; but we must be realistic and not allow hope to triumph over past experience.

Child benefit is a good example. It is a very expensive benefit which goes to pauper and plutocrat alike. Only 22 per cent of its cost is actually needed to keep people out of poverty. Since it is a well-established benefit and helps people at a time in their lives when they incur extra expense, the SDP is not replacing it with a withdrawable benefit. Instead we propose to increase it and at the same time to make it taxable as part of the income of the recipient. The result is that the only ones who gain are non-taxpaying mothers. It is among one-earner families with children and the unemployed (who will also receive child benefit under our scheme) that the poorest households are to be found.

Our more targeted approach means that we can afford to give a £4.50 increase per child at a cost of £1.2 billion. Labour proposes an increase of £3 per child at a cost of £1.8 billion.

Apart from child benefit, our main instrument for providing help is the proposed new Basic Benefit, which replaces Family Income Supplement and Supplementary Benefit. Because it is targeted and withdrawable as income rises, it again enables us to provide help on a scale that Labour cannot match. On average, families with children and low income, whether in or out of work, will be £14 to £15 a week better off.

UNIVERSALISM is not the only flaw in Labour's plans. The second is the belief that a minimum wage would relieve poverty. Not only is it likely to increase unemployment, but, as work by Professor Layard and others has shown, in most of the poorest families what the earner is earning is well above any feasible minimum wage. The poorest families are poor because there are several children and the wife is not working. A higher minimum wage would mainly benefit working wives and single people. The way to help low earners with families is through a better system of tax and benefits.

A third error is to believe that a graduated income tax will improve the tax system. This proposal was considered by a Commons Select Committee in 1983. They found that the loss of revenue from replacing part of the present basic rate with a lower rate would be huge. As a result the higher rate bands would have to start at a point below average wages. The cost, for example of introducing rates of 10 per cent and 20 per cent would mean that (in 1983/4 figures) a 50 per cent rate would become payable at £100 a week and the 60 per cent rate would start at £170 a week!

The same objections would apply to Micheal Meacher's proposals for a 15-30-45-60-75 progression. The cost of so many taxpayers paying 15 per cent instead of the basic rate would have a horrendous effect on rates at, and just above, average earnings. It is somewhat ironic that the chairman of the Commons committee was Michael Meacher.

Finally there is a wide gulf between the parties in their approach to structural reform. Labour would leave tax and benefits in separate compartments. They would also leave National Insurance in place despite its obvious shortcomings.

To take the latter first: let us be clear that the term 'National Insurance' is a fraud. There is no actuarial link between contributions and benefits. The mythical Insurance Fund is dealt with in exactly the same way as general taxation, although separately administered. The fact is that individuals' contributions are a *tax*, not an insurance scheme, and what is more a very regressive, anomalous and wasteful tax. It hurts the low paid most, taxes some pay rises at over 100 per cent and ties up 100,000 civil servants in pointless administration.

Our decision to abolish also helps those pensioners who do not have a sufficient contribution record and a number of married women who were unable to contribute fully to qualify for the whole basic pension. This will free a very large number of old people from the burden of having to apply for the means-tested supplementary pension. In fact the abolition of the National Insurance system and its integration with income tax makes such obvious good sense that only fear of misunderstanding or sheer conservatism can explain Labour's inaction.

The merging of tax and benefits administration is no less desirable. First, merger will enable us to avoid the stigma of means-testing. The qualification for benefit, like the liability to pay tax, will be decided on the basis of a much simplified tax return. There can be no objection to a test of income and needs which is the same for everybody.

Second, we have so arranged our benefits that, with one exception (unemployment benefit), the treatment of those in work and out of work will be the same. Both will get child benefit and Basic Benefit. The unemployed will no longer suffer a 100 per cent deduction from benefit for any other income above the £4 disregard, so the incentives for them to take work are much improved.

Third, because the Basic Benefit will be paid with wages under one unified tax/benefit code, the take-up problem that has plagued Family Income Supplement should disappear. The worst disadvantages of selective benefits have therefore been avoided.

Simplification will provoke opposition. Everyone who gains from present anomalies and is likely to lose from their elimination will object. But the tangle of benefits and the unfairness and illogicalities of the tax system should no longer be tolerated. No radical party should fail to grasp that nettle. □

*Dick Taverne QC is the author of the SDP's tax and benefits proposals.*



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# DIARY

Alison Hennegan

*Cambridge*

Last week's *NS* article on sex education sent me to a rarely visited outpost of my library — five pocket-sized pamphlets published between 1917 and 1936 and issued by the Alliance of Honour (founded 1903: motto '*Unity* strengthens the cause and the individual position'). Its aims were clear and unflinchingly stated: 'The promotion of Purity on Christian principles'. Unbelievers, Jews and Infidels were, presumably, to make their own arrangements. It stood for 'Absolute chastity before marriage, and absolute faithfulness after' and it sought to show 'That Purity is possible, healthy and manly' — an interesting array of somewhat defensive adjectives which irresistibly evoke their opposites and suggest that the Alliance was well, if sadly, aware that the multitude considered male virtue unattainable, injurious and thoroughly suspect.

By the 1920s there were additional Sections: for Women (18+), Girls (14-17) and Lads '(12-15, enrolled as "Young Knights". Fee 2d.)'. Figures for 1922-3 suggest the scale of operations: '6,732 new members enrolled. 124 new Branches formed. 127,920 persons addressed at meetings. 1,244,480 booklets and leaflet messages issued'.

○

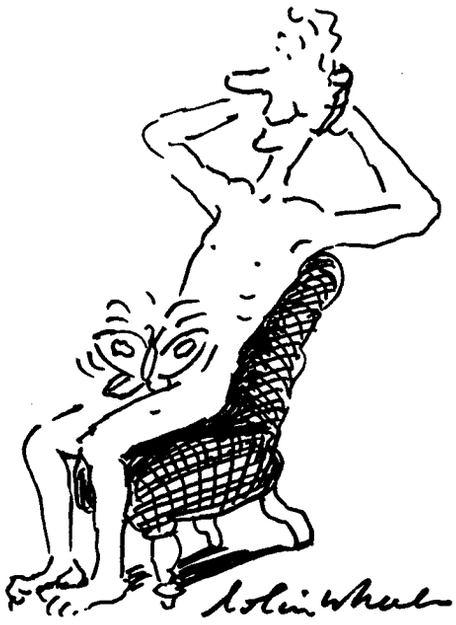
The Alliance was a prodigious producer of pamphlets, albeit occasionally incautious in promoting them. (Was it, I ask myself, wise to bracket *What A Young Man Can Do* with *Ruined Lives*? Should *Marks of Manhood* have been coupled with *Impure Thoughts*?) But it's always easy to raise a cheap laugh against sex-reformers of an earlier age and some of the Alliance's general aims I feel disinclined to mock. It was, for example, firmly opposed to the sexual double standard. It deplored the tendency to ostracize 'fallen' women whilst still sending dinner invitations to the men who'd tripped them up. It recognized and detested the buying and selling of women in marriage. The title of Mrs Clare Goslett's *Simple Hints to Mothers of Little Boys* prompts, perhaps, a smile as does the stern warning 'For private reading. Not to be left about'. But, once inside, we realize the simplicity is for the mother's sake as much as the child's. These are the facts about male physiology which 'nice' women, wives and mothers though they be, do not know, facts which some critics felt Mrs Goslett should never have explained so clearly. In a later edition, outspokenly re-titled *Simple Hints for Mothers on the Home Sex-Training of Boys*, she defended herself, pointing out that other more sophisticated publications were useless since they assumed a knowledge most women did not have. I lament, it's true, Mrs Goslett's assumption that a father can no more instruct his infant son 'than he can wash and dress the child' and I deplore the occasional coyness ('Tiny hands will wander . . .') and the flurry of mixed metaphors which variously transmute the human boy into a little ship stumbling in the dark round dangerous corners, 'a lovely white unwritten book', a rung on the ladder of life and an unhoed garden. But I applaud her caveats against corporal punishments, her scepticism about teaching human reproduction via botany, and her insistence that films and stories which link sexual excitement and violence are 'bad vehicles for the imagination'.

○

Would that I could whole-heartedly applaud T. Miller Neatby's *Personal: To Boys* ('second edition, completing 16,000') or the Rev. J. E. Ward's *Dad's Letters to His Boy About His Boy-Manhood* ('1936, seventh edition'). At least Neatby, a doctor, puts minds at rest by stating firmly *'masturbation does* not *produce disease'* and has the grace to admit that his own profession's mainly responsible for the belief that it does. What a pity, then, that the Medical Council of the Alliance of Honour or the Council of Medical Officers of Schools Association, whose weighty imprimatur appears on the Alliance's publications so that 'the reader can place absolute reliance on the scientific accuracy' of their contents, didn't check *Dad's Letters* more closely. Even in 1917, H. Bisseker ('Formerly a Public School House-Master') had acknowledged, in *In Confidence: To Boys*, that involuntary nocturnal emissions weren't harmful. Twenty years later Dad warns his Boy that it's *always* dangerous when semen leaves an unmarried body. The ghost of Spermatorrhoea, that mythical disease invented by the medical profession, lingers still.

○

Even T. Neatby disappoints. He *could* explain



to you why masturbation's harmful, 'But as conscience tells you that, I need say no more about it'. And although he's prepared to allow you to take the worst of the chill off your cold bath he, like Mr Bisseker, is a great believer in sleeping on your side and cotton reels. (You tie an empty reel round you so that it's lodged in the small of your back. 'If then you turn over during sleep you will soon "turn again"!') Butterflies are good, too. You collect them, to take your mind off other things. And you don't just stick a pin through them and put them in a case. 'Name them, classify them, find out something about their habits and their life-history'. Could it possibly be that Kinsey, that dedicated and internationally renowned entomologist and taxonomist, once read a copy of *Personal: To Boys*?

○

Indoor types might find writing poetry more useful 'because it engages the hands and the mind at the same time'. The late Canon Bothamley, on the other hand, suggested reading detective stories instead: 'The breathless absorbing mystery story has its uses'.

○

Some months before he killed and dismembered her, Norman Thorne chivvied Elsie Cameron, his fiancée, into joining the Alliance's Women's Section (annual subscription, one shilling) at their 1924 Wembley Exhibition stall. Thorne himself was already a member though not, apparently, a very diligent one since Elsie soon had reason to believe she was pregnant by him and begged him to marry her. At his trial the jury declined to believe that Elsie had committed suicide and he'd panicked on discovering her body. Too many men had already used the same excuse that year.

Poor Elsie. Might things have been different, I wonder, if she'd read another of Mrs Goslett's publications, *The Unrivalled Power: Hints to Girls About Men*. Price 2d each, or 1/6 a dozen, and possibly worth every penny.

# ROGER WODDIS

## A safer place

*Replying to a question from an Italian journalist on how far the Stockholm disarmament conference had progressed from Dante's Inferno, the chief Soviet negotiator, Mr Oleg Grinevsky, said: 'We have not yet reached paradise. But we have progressed to purgatory.'*

Dante thought few would go to hell,
Though some would suffer for a spell,
And even those with fat cigars,
When purified, could reach the stars.

In Stockholm, where the champagne flows
And none is blind or bellicose,
They are less prone to talk of spies
Than seek the path to paradise.

Some may be heard to mutter, 'Dupes!
They'll muster thirteen thousand troops;
Such forces, plus three hundred tanks,
Are all they need to turn our flanks.'

This comedy is not divine,
And Dante might have changed his line:
'In easing tension lies release,
And in the common will our peace.'



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# The British publishers' tale. . .

*Alternative or mainstream, British publishers confront the dilemma of export to South Africa: JANE DIBBLIN investigates their solutions*

'ANY RADICAL BOOKS which get into South Africa have to be a good thing,' said publisher Ronald Seagal. 'But, if they weaken the boycott, then it's the boycott I would protect.' Seagal, a radical white South African who left the country in the Sixties and has been actively involved in the boycott of South Africa initiated by the African National Congress, was speaking last year during the furore over radical booksellers exporting titles to South Africa.

At the time, the Gay Men's Press was dragged unwillingly into the limelight over a contract to export books to South Africa. Its directors have since decided to scrap the contract, due to pressure from certain voices on the left. Other publishers have chosen not to follow suit. The ANC sees books as a delicate and complex area and prefers not to make a hard and fast rule on whether or not they should be part of the boycott; Mike Terry of Anti-Apartheid says that, while they support publications being sent on demand, they draw a line when it comes to British publishers making a commercial venture out of South Africa.

There are a host of just such publishers, more or less fuelled by ideals, making more or less money. Of the better known mainstream British publishers, Oxford University Press, Heinemann, Collins, Macmillan, Hodder and Stoughton and Century Hutchinson have subsidiaries which publish their own lists as well as importing books from the parent company and, in some cases, from other publishers. Quartet is represented by an agency, Media House. Longman has a minority interest in an associate company, Maskew, Miller, Longman, and shares an agency — Longman Penguin — with Penguin.

What they have in common is a marked coyness about admitting figures — under South African law only public companies have to make their profits known — and an agreement that the total collapse of the rand has been extremely bad for business. Imported books have nearly doubled in price.

Even so, Patrick Wright, group director of sales and marketing for Penguin in Britain, says, 'It's a substantial export market.' 'A traditionally good market for Britain,' says Philip Attenborough, chairman of Hodder and Stoughton. Robert Snuggs of Collins reckons more hardback fiction is bought in South Africa than in Britain. Make no mistake, business is what it's about; David Elliot of Quartet is tempted to write off the market now that the rand has collapsed. 'We were selling 10,000 books a year there. Now it's 2,000.'

Other publishers still see profit there to be made — but also claim moral imperatives. Virtually every publisher — bar Quartet — says it has a policy on the country which includes meeting black educational needs and employing a multiracial workforce: 'Completely equal opportunity,' says Attenborough. OUP, Longman, Hodder and Stoughton and Macmillan all publish school books in local languages, Xhosa, Zulu and Tswana.

'Powerful Afrikaans publishing houses now dominate the scene,' says Neville Gracie, manager of OUP South Africa, 'so we're responding to a need for text books in other languages.' 'We feel that freedom of information is essential and it's particularly important that all children have access to text books': Rob Francis of Longman. Others see it rather more pragmatically, though still with some idealism. 'We want to be equipped to deal with a future multiracial country,' said Attenborough.

Jeremy Gordon, managing director of Exclusive Books South Africa (part of Premier, which is owned by Anglo American;



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another Premier subsidiary publishes Corgi), is rather more frank about the whys and wherefores of the industry. *All* publishers, local and foreign, want to get a bigger slice of the black educational books market, he says. As all books in Bantu education are ordered by the education authorities, the quantities can be huge for the regional market: orders of 500,000 are possible. With that sort of sum at stake, compromise is highly tempting, beginning with learning to be very careful about which titles you offer and being willing to abridge books.

While the censorship laws leave no doubt that Pretoria sees the written word as a threat, most of these publishers are rarely troubled by the censors: partly because, as everyone agrees, there has been a marked relaxation of censorship in the last five years, but also because they rarely carry the type of books which would be banned. As Gracie pointed out, with a pained note, OUP's image means that it's just not approached by the fiery young writers of today. Then there's the inevitable consequence of self-censorship: the second volume of OUP's *Oxford History of South Africa*, for example, was published back in 1971 leaving out of the South African edition the chapter on African nationalism. Snuggs of Collins admits that they now have a novel in the pipeline about South Africa which they simply won't bother trying to publish there. What the censors are looking for, says Elliott of Quartet, is anything 'radical or rude'; Heinemann is expecting trouble with Jackie Collins' forthcoming *Hollywood Husbands*. Yet, because censorship is not followed in the so-called independent homelands, a trip to a casino in Bhoputtatswana can yield Heinemann's banned book on Mandela.

Are British publishers just providing white South Africa with unchallenging work by white authors? Only a handful of British publishers are really looking for local black writers and the readership is mainly white. Martin Theron of Heinemann South Africa — perhaps the most radical of the 'mainstream' houses — says that, although an internationally profitable capitalist concern, it also makes a point of keeping books which will reach black readers at the lowest prices, while making its profits on books which are popular with whites. But he stresses the problems: almost no bookshops in black rural areas and very few in black urban areas, even if people *did* have the money to buy. The standard of schooling offered to blacks is such that many leave illiterate. And yet Heinemann finds that in promoting work of local black writers it is attracting many new manuscripts.

Not surprisingly, all the publishers are aghast at the idea of a total cultural boycott. Geoff Todd, financial director of Macmillan in Britain: 'It would be a grave mistake to boycott books. Some material wouldn't make any difference, but it's senseless to withold the flow of information of books.'

Of course, taxes paid by British subsidiaries — and books are heavily taxed there — are contributing to the government's financial survival, but a boycott of books can't be based on such a simple equation. South Africa's censorship laws are only one example in a long tradition of book burning and banning by States fearful of their own populations, so an organised self-censorship of books strikes uncomfortable resonances for many. And, because black children in schools do need text books, and their older sisters and brothers do need to be nurtured by the rare works by local and other black writers which make it into the Afrikaans dominated world of print, and because the English language houses make some, however flawed, contribution to this, it seems most unlikely that a boycott of British publishing subsidiaries is about to be called for. □

# . . . and the South African

*Ravan Press of Johannesburg has been publishing English-language, radical books ('work that challenges apartheid ideology') since the Soweto uprising of 1976: MIKE KIRKWOOD, a member of Ravan's editorial committee, reviews the current preoccupations of English language writers in South Africa*

SOUTH AFRICA'S ENGLISH Academy, a non-governmental body of high prestige and considerable persuasion in matters pertaining to the use of English by white and black South Africans, recently held a conference to mark its Silver Jubilee. Reviewing the Academy's history, its president could assure his audience that 'we have not fiddled while the car tyres burned'. Nevertheless, it was clear that liberal English-speaking South Africans (ESSAs is the standard abbreviation) were in for more than another bout of soul-searching. An unusually wide consultative net had been thrown out to draw participation from working-class and black community organisations with a special interest in language, educational and cultural questions. Those rounded up were not confined to the usual suspects, and Njabulo S. Ndebele came from Lesotho to give the 'keynote address'.

Ndebele's collection of stories, *Fools* (published by Longman in the UK), won Africa's major book prize, the Noma Award, in 1984. He is professor of English, Afro-American and African Literature at the University of Lesotho and, at the conference, gave a characteristic performance. Courteous and witty throughout, mild and disarming in his opening remarks, he wielded an argument as sharp as a sacrificial knife. English in South Africa 'could not be considered an innocent language'. Is is not the world language of corporate capitalism? Does it not service an enslaving consumerism? Doesn't 'the functional acquisition of English . . . further reinforce the instrumentalisation of people as units of labour?' Doesn't the language encode 'the primacy of western civilisation and its spectrum of values embodied in what has been called free enterprise and the special kind of democracy founded on it'? And — crucially — 'does this tradition include the kind of grassroots democracy that is flowering in the townships of South Africa?'

Relating attempts to open up participation in the language and in other cultural spheres to current political reforms in South Africa, Ndebele homed in on the central flaw: a failure to question the premises on which this magnanimity proceeds. The demand of the oppressed is no longer *participation* in a restructured dispensation, but the *creation* of new structures. Thus 'South African English must be open to the possibility of becoming a new language'. It must be recognised that, while 'English may be spoken universally, it


**THE POLITICAL QUARTERLY**

**Edited by Colin Crouch and Rudolf Klein**

Volume 57 Number 4

**PREPARING FOR A HUNG PARLIAMENT**

At last, a close look at the issue everyone thinks about but no one in politics discusses: how could the policies of Labour and the Alliance be combined in a non-Conservative coalition government? Volume 57 Number 4 of *The Political Quarterly* addresses this issue in the following articles:

Paul Hirst: **THE ISSUES AT STAKE IN COALITION POLITICS**; Lawrence Freedman: **DEFENCE**; Christopher Huhne: **ECONOMIC POLITICS**; and Adrian Webb: **SOCIAL POLITICS**.

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does not carry the sum total of the world's wisdom. The emergence of new forms of democracy, of new ways of social thinking will require not a condescending attitude of "management", but a deep understanding . . . that should lead to a radical codification of social thought determined by new forms of social practice, a viable, home-grown, humanistic ethical tradition'.

If South Africa has found its Ngugi *before* the political (and economic?) transformation of which so many blacks (and a few whites) are dreaming, that may yet be of vital consequence. Meanwhile, among the emergent cultural practices which give weight to the vision outlined above, Ndebele's own storytelling has claimed a central place.

An example: a story which he read during the conference dealt with the effect on a young couple of the death of their two-year-old son, a 'stray bullet' victim of the occupation of the townships by the armed forces, and the necessity they are under to 'buy back' the corpse from the morgue in order to bury it. It happened, as it so frequently does in South Africa these days, that even as we listened to the story fiction was being replicated by real events: twelve of those who died in 'the battle of Soweto' were being buried without the consent or knowledge of relatives.

Yet Ndebele's stories aim at something more than holding up a dumb mirror to events; he has criticised 'an art of anticipated surfaces rather than one of processes' in which 'recognition does not necessarily lead to transformation', in which the '*human* anonymity' of those who are depicted as victims of apartheid 'becomes the direct equivalent of the anonymity to which the oppressive system consigns millions of oppressed Africans'.

Told from the viewpoint of the woman, his story unfolded the impact the episode has on the relationship of the couple. They draw apart, are forced into a reassessment of each other and of their life strategies. In the man's attempts to resolve their predicament we identify responses which reproduce the rhetoric and posturing of an earlier phase of struggle: of protest and the attempt to secure individual justice by appealing to the compromised 'rule of law'. These responses are understood, however, at the psychological, human level; the man's recognition of his impotence as the protector of his family leads to the creation of a stronger bond with his wife and, through her, with the resilience in struggle of the community around them. There will be another child and 'Surely we shall prevail'. That 'we' in the concluding sentence has been arriving throughout the telling of the story.

Another voice heard at the conference was that of former political prisoner, poet, academic and activist, Jeremy Cronin. His paper was read for him. Like many other UDF office bearers during the current state of emergency, he is semi-underground. Cronin's published work, as critic and poet, also addresses 'the possibility of South African English becoming a new language'. He has used Julia Kristeva's idea of 'the "semiotic" disruption of the "symbolic" order that occurs in poetic language' to telling effect in understanding the significance of the 'black consciousness' poetry of the Seventies, in particular that of Mongane Serote. 'The irruption of the "semiotic" paves the way for another, different symbolic order. The "I" that is coming is, among other things, a new thetic subjectivity, taking up a new signifying position within the English language'.

Noting, in the new conjuncture of the Eighties, 'a proletarian appropriation of the vernacular praise poetry tradition' among many other new cultural forms (funeral oratory, 'toyi-toyi' dancing, worker plays and choirs), Cronin has spoken of the 'new aesthetic demands and new duties' this shift imposes on writers.

His own collection of poems, *Inside* (Ravan), drawing mainly on his seven-year jail sentence for political work, has established the prison experience of South Africa's numerous political captives as a focal point in the national consciousness. In these poems, prison is both a microcosm of South African society and a meditative space in which the 'deep history' of individual and national life can be registered, pulsing below the seeming stasis of repression.

A swift stream in the high mountains,
dropping dental, lateral,
Clicking in its palate like the flaking of stone tools;
And a wide river that grazes the plains,
Lows like the wind in summer maize.
And a waterfall that hums like a turbine
And is whirled into light.

A river that carries many tongues in its mouth.

A lively session at the conference centred on the 'aesthetic demands' set up by worker plays. Since the innovative moment of Workshop '71, which produced such plays as *Crossroads, Uhlanga (The Reed)* and *Survival* between 1971 and 1976, workshop theatre has attempted to develop a new dramatic language in South Africa. By the Eighties the black trade union movement had created a significant space for cultural struggle within its organisation. It is in this space that the workshop movement has been able to grapple with its major obstacle: the insulation of the resulting artwork from the working-class audience whose experience has been mined in the process of production.

One contemporary worker play, *The Long March*, will soon be accessible to audiences in Europe. Created by the Sarmcol-BTR workers in the course of their protracted struggle with the local management of this multinational, it is being performed to coincide with the hearing (at the Hague) of their case against BTR for infringement of the EEC's Code of Conduct. Among many interesting aspects of the play's creative dynamics is the issue of language. It was first performed entirely in Zulu, but some English was introduced when it played before workers in the predominantly Sotho-speaking Transvaal. That process — now extended as the play invites a leap of the imagination to invigorate the cliché of international solidarity — has much to do with the possibility of a new South African English. □

*Ravan Press's UK distributors are Third World Publications, 151 Stratford Road, Birmingham B11 1RD (021-773 6572)*



**CINEMA**

# Cradle of democracy

Judith Williamson

**Otello** (U)
*ABC, Shaftesbury Avenue; ABC, Fulham Road*
**The Legend of the Suram Fortress** (U)
*Camden Plaza*
**Eleni** (PG)
*Cannon, Haymarket*

IN FINANCING Zeffirelli's **Otello** — based on the Verdi opera — Cannon producers Golan and Globus are clearly hoping to up their cultural as well as financial capital. Yet, like Bob Hoskins buying his flowery but definitely not upper-class shirt in *Mona Lisa*, they may have missed their mark. In this country opera has become the property of the class with the strongest distaste for vulgar displays of emotional extremity, and Zeffirelli's film is excessive rather than restrained, obvious rather than subtle.

His melodramatic style, given to visual showiness, can sometimes be cloying (as in his *Romeo and Juliet*) but it suits this occasion well, the story itself being one of tragic extremes. He is not merely translating an exclusive art form into one with a wider audience; in the process he has changed the tone, restoring the drama and removing the aura of High Culture which makes most people feel opera is so far removed from them.

Paradjanov's **Legend of the Suram Fortress** is extremely visual in a quite different way. If it seems odd to single out any film as visual, this is because, for once, the image is not subordinate to the plot. Paradjanov is an idiosyncratic Armenian-Soviet director whose extraordinarily pictorial films are like series of carefully composed tableaux, both stark and rich. In his last film, *The Colour of Pomegranates*, their cumulative beauty paid homage to Armenian and Georgian cultures; his new film tells a Georgian story: the legend of the fortress. It constructs a myth through a series of images at once historical and abstract: historical in their 'authenticity' and abstract in their visual patterning. The way myth and history are given the same physical status creates a complexity which in some respects goes further than *The Colour of Pomegranates*; yet, like the earlier film, this one's impact comes from its beauty as a thing, rather than its being *about* things (it is more like a fresco than a novel), making it closer to avant-garde than conventional 'Art' film. Any work which is so deliberately 'aesthetic' risks seeming precious; as does anyone trying to describe it. Paradjanov's use of film is completely unique.

**Eleni** is arguably the worst movie opening this week, but also the most telling about certain proccupations of our time. Directed by



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## Trailers

*A selection of forthcoming cinema events, festivals, seasons, etc.*

**The Ritzy Cinema**, Brixton, has started a season of Black Film, with a programme featuring black actors from the 1920s to the present. A screening of *The Color Purple* on 29 September will be followed by a discussion. Further details from the Ritzy (01-737 2121).

**The Ninth Tyneside** Film Festival opens at the Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle, on 8 October. Tickets are available now for a wide selection of new films (including *Otello*, reviewed this week). For further information ring 091-232 8289.

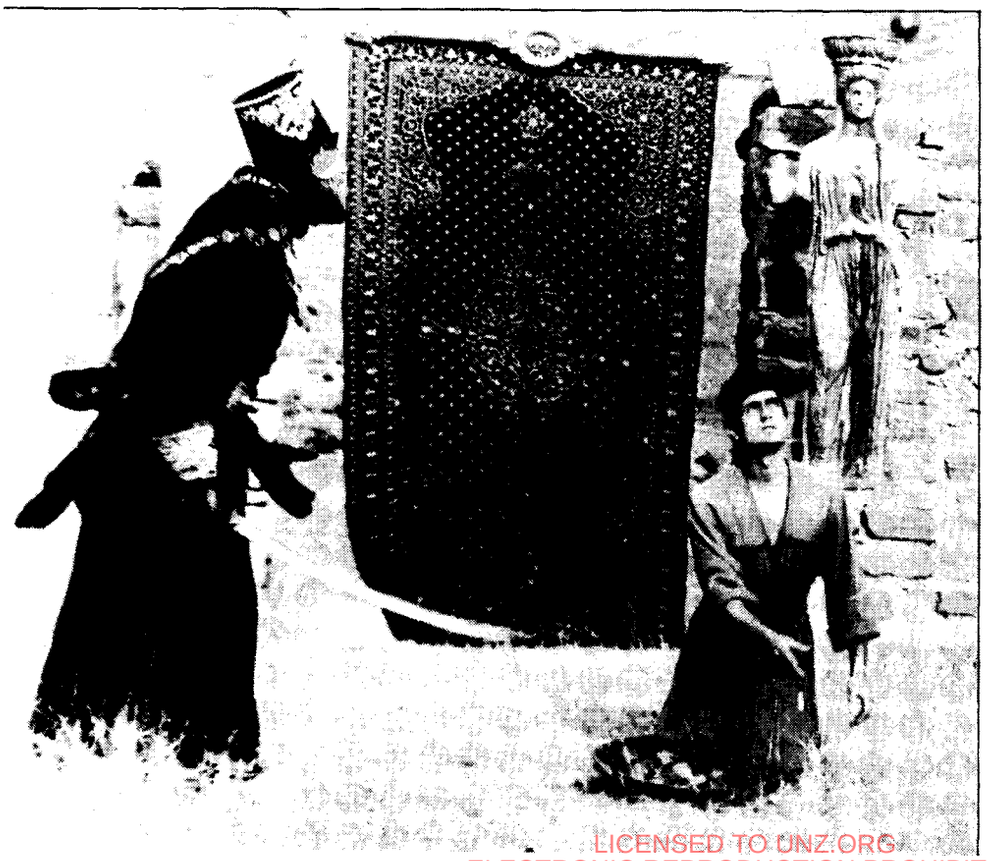
Peter Yates, it is based on the best-seller by American journalist Nick Gage (played by John Malkovitch) and charts his return to Greece in search of the people responsible for his mother's death during the communist occupation of their village in the civil war. The journalist hero is a particularly evocative character in contemporary cinema (e.g. *Defence of the Realm*). With his tape recorder and his thirst for facts, this figure has replaced the detective as our screen representative of the Need to Know. No matter how rude he is to the people he questions, he is unquestionably the good guy, whatever he finds out is unquestionably true.

*Eleni* combines the search for truth with the quest for the mother — an oedipal project if ever there was one. And the topical element in this mythic theme is the film's representation of motherhood as a non-political political platform — a kind of SDP position. Eleni is presented as being on no 'side' in the civil war; 'I have no sympathies,' she tells an interrogator. Yet she definitely has a cause: she doesn't just love her family, she believes in it with all the fervour of a political creed. Her dying words 'My children' (the answer to Nick's riddle) are not murmured privately, but shouted to the world like a manifesto.

The enemy of motherhood is shown clearly and repeatedly to be communism: we are supposed to sympathise with Eleni when she cripples her eldest daughter with a hot branding iron rather than let her go with the communist youth. Because communists are shown trying to separate families, the mother's anti-communism appears as 'instinctive' as her maternal feelings. This device is not new, but it is interesting that it should surface at this moment (and also that the multiple and conflicting occupations of the village in the book should be rolled into the simple communist dictatorship of the film — at a time when Greece finally has a socialist government). The film is predicated on the contradiction of setting up motherhood in political opposition to communism (and in harmony with the US: Eleni is dubbed 'Amerikaner' and her children escape to the States) while insisting that it is totally apolitical. Only the villain, the chief communist occupier, dares to suggest that, in a civil war, no one is neutral; and this is presented merely as further illustration of his extremism, as being as self-evidently wicked as his eyebrows. The film operates a simple visual system whereby the communists can be identified by their nasty faces while the 'neutral' people all have big, appealing eyes. However, what is really bizarre is the way that Eleni, played by Kate Nelligan, bears a striking resemblance to Victoria Gillick in her looks as well as her general philosophy, the latter summed up in a scene of advice-giving to her daughter of which Mrs Gillick would be proud.

Having established motherhood as the repository of all the film's positive values, all that remains is for it to be taken over by Nick himself, as he returns to his children and discovers himself as a father — another topical concern, of which more next week. □

**Patterns within patterns in Paradjanov's *Legend of the Suram Fortress***



## TELEVISION

# Royal jelly

Hugo Williams

A SATIRICAL story called 'The Pukey' (I forget by whom) appeared in *Encounter* long ago and told of a squat-looking animal that crouched in the living-room being sick. How big I felt spotting the satire!

Returning to my living-room after the summer, I can't help noticing the pukey sitting there. Its disgusting habits are only too real, I now see, as I set to work with mop and pail. If I so much as look at it, waste matter fountains onto my boots, spaghetti hits my shirt-front. As if for the first time, I take in the sickly colours, the undigested ingredients with tomato skins, the sour smell of processed food attacked by rancorous enzymes. Is it coming from my armpits? I ask myself. No, it's that pukey again. Squirt it with something, somebody.

Watching the pukey offers about the same sensory stimulation as a visit to the supermarket. It's got the same hissy muzac, cheesey autumnal colouring, permitted preservatives; the same consensus flavouring: monosodium videomate. Tense but blinkered, hypnotised by hype, one allows its sterile passageways of repeats to pass before one's eyes on a loop. 'Hang on a sec,' someone will say, 'I think there's something on after The News . . .' And so one button-hops in a daze, imagining one has not gone to bed yet, then falls asleep in the middle of one's favourite film to wake in a heap of post-masturbatory gloom. And we pay for this service. The whole thing is ruined for me by there being too much of it, too many suited chatterboxes — making too many programmes that are vitally important if you happen to be watching them, not at all if you aren't — who would be better employed in the country, growing peas. But what can you do?

Lenny Henry had the right idea. In last week's **Lenny Henry Tonight** (BBC1) he played a time-dick in another *Hitch-hicker's Guide to the Galaxy* rip-off: 'People call me on the timephone and I travel into the future and solve crimes that haven't been committed yet.' In the year 2030 the problem seems to be that someone has filled in all the plug sockets in the country. No one can plug anything in and the whole place is in chaos. Ethiopia is the most advanced nation. Now there's a thought. I wonder, would Polyfilla do the trick?

If the Queen is incorrigibly radio — 'My Commonwealth and I . . .' — the Prince and Princess of Wales are irredeemably TV. They are made of that mildly-addictive, orange-coloured spread that oozes out of televisions and supermarkets: everyone's favourite taste, originally dried blood but now chemically simulated to keep them within our budget. The concept of a 'behind the scenes' glimpse of the royal couple, **In Private, In Public: The Prince and Princess of Wales** (ITV), invited one to imagine their lives as a series of theatrical layers leading backwards from



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throne room to bedroom to nothingness, each with its prescribed degree of artificiality and etiquette. Which layer had we reached now? Watching them standing on their lawn-side heli-pad telling each other 'See you, what, about four?' made you realise that people can normalise almost anything if they start young enough. (Charles was off to visit some Rastas.) Over the years the royal face muscles have developed such ambiguous responses that they now express almost anything you care to require of them.

Diana's technique is rather different from her husband's. Like other film stars, she acts 'dumb' in order to have something to say on regimental and other occasions. 'Shall I press this button?' she'll baby-talk appealingly. 'Better not, Ma'am,' the colour-sergeant will advise. I particularly admired the expression of bashful arousal on her face when a couple showed her their adopted Down's syndrome baby and told her it was 'exactly what we wanted, made to measure'. Her performance is at least as subtle as Charles', with several layers left showing, like a petticoat, as if she were seriously stage-struck. 'She can seem shy and confident at the same time,' observed Alastair Burnett, whose groisey patter rarely got up off its knees. I'd keep an eye on that trend if I were Charles. She certainly looks shifty. I wonder how long she'll stick it, or is her heart set on greater things? The biggest surprise of the film was how incredibly pleasant and luxurious their lives are. I had thought they were more humdrum and hard-pressed.

The theme music for the above everyday tale of telly-folk was written by head-banded rocker Mark Knopfler, who also appeared on the annual autumn bonfire **Rock Around the Clock** (BBC2), a raking together of the year's musical overmatter which began with Norwegian teen-dreams a-ha and descended through various contests and interludes, including *Championship Darts*, Dire Straits, Genesis, *NewsView*, The Damned, The Smiths and Bryan Ferry. The only relief were ZZ Top, but I was upstairs asleep at that moment.

A form of food substitute which the most cynical supermarket wouldn't dare stock was **Love With a Perfect Stranger** (ITV), a sweetish gruel for romance sufferers. It concerns a beautiful fashion-firm boss who meets a tousled Englishman (Daniel Massey) on a train to Florence. She is rescued by him from a handsome fashion spy over cocktails, then 'given' Florence for breakfast in various sumptuous chateaux he seems to own.

She : 'This has to be the most beautiful city in the world.'

He: 'It's the cradle of civilisation.'

His eyelids droop between every word and two members of my family had to look away when his elongated upper lip found its way in under Marilu Henner's nose for The Kiss. In the end it's the fashion house or him, he feels; but, as he's an Irish Earl with a seat the size of Versailles, a stud, a stage Irishman retainer, a Landau, droopy eyes and an elongated upper lip, he feels justified in this olde worlde point of view, as does Marilu. 'And this is all your land?' 'As far as the eye can see.' When a handsome rival's dialogue goes over the top at one point, Massey says, 'I'm going to lie down, I feel nauseated.' Heros of Mills and Boon pulpers shouldn't throw . . . up. □

## RECORDS

### Leave my Name at the Door

DISTRICT SIX *Wave* 29

Arithmetic may not be their strong point — after all, two black South Africans and three Caucasians add up to no more than five — but District Six is a band at its best in front of an audience. So recording it in action at the Bass Clef club was a stout idea.

The three white players — trumpeter Jim Dvorak, saxophonist Harrison Smith, bass guitarist Dill Katz — combine with the pianist Mervyn Africa and drummer Brian Abrahams in music that mixes the kwela rhythms of the townships with fairly straight-ahead modern jazz (the modal 'In Our Hands' even has echoes of Miles Davis). Harrison Smith toys with arpeggios, rather like Coleman Hawkins used to do, in a ballad 'The Nameless One', but jostles Dvorak's trumpet excitingly in 'Drums For Nelson'. Sporadic outbusts of singing add to the atmosphere.

### Oshumare

BILLY HART *Gramavision* 18-8502-1

France may not hold a monopoly on new jazz violinists but the nation certainly produces more than anywhere else. Didier Lockwood is one of the best, silkily effective, a cunning improviser on an instrument still resented by some jazz diehards.

If you can't catch him at the Bass Cleff Club on 25 September, sample him on a couple of tracks on this LP ('Oshumare' turns out to be Yoruba for 'God or goddess of the rainbow'). Billy Hart, a drummer who has worked in rock and soul bands as well as with Wes Montgomery, Stan Getz and Herbie Hancock, leads a group that includes two outstanding saxophonists, Steve Coleman and Branford Marsalis, a pair of guitarists — Bill Frisell and Kevin Eubanks — and the British-born Dave Holland on bass. Five of the musicians contribute scores, which may be one reason why the group, despite its excellence, lacks a really convincing identity.

### Mournin' Blues

BOB CROSBY *Affinity* AFS 1014

The Swing Era was much concerned with seeming up-to-the-minute. All the odder, therefore, was the success of big band specialising in orchestral Dixieland, substituting sections of trumpets, trombones and reeds for the classic New Orleans triumvirate. 'South Rampart Street Parade', striding along joyously, illustrates the process at its best. The band was really a co-operative, with Bing's young brother elected to act as frontman. Many of the musicians were white New Orleanians, including the superb clarinettist, Irving Prestopnik, who changed his surname to Fazola: as a man, grotesquely overweight; as a player, extraordinarily lissom. But good soloists abounded, featured both in the full band and the spin-off small group, The Bobcats: Eddie Miller, a tenor saxophonist with an elliptical style; trumpeters Billy Butterfield, Yank Lawson and Sterling Bose; and, at different times, three exceptional pianists — Bob Zurke, who even contrived to gather praise from Jelly Roll Morton, and two Chicagoans — Joe Sullivan and the deliciously staccato Jess Stacy, at his best in 'Spain', slicing notes rather than playing them.

### Sweet 'n' Lowdown

JABBO SMITH & HIS RHYTHM ACES *Affinity* AFS 1029

Jabbo Smith was expert at acting a part, suiting his trumpet playing to the occasion. This LP contains both his baleful use of the mute when deputising for Bubber Miley on one of Duke Ellington's early versions of 'Black and Tan Fantasy' and the acrobatics he went in for with his own Rhythm Aces, a group organised in Chicago in 1929 especially to make records that would compete with Louis Armstrong's. A bold, perhaps rash plan. In fact, Smith was one of the few trumpet players around at the time with a technique that could be compared with Armstrong's. But his approach was closer to Henry Allen's or that of the next bright young hero, Roy Eldridge, impetuous rather than majestic, fond of teetering on the edge of technical impossibility. He sings, too, soliloquising like Bert Williams in 'Let's Get Together' and elsewhere scatting roguishly.

**Charles Fox**

## DANCE

# Bat out of hell

Stephanie Jordan

### No Fire Escape in Hell

MICHAEL CLARK Sadler's Wells

MICHAEL CLARK HAS achieved something unprecedented in a country which gives its dance artists short shrift. Within five years (and, even now, aged only 24) he has leapt from the small-scale , ad hoc and penniless fringe to a sell-out season at Sadler's Wells, breaking that theatre's exclusive tradition of British repertory companies. Clark also enjoys a medium-sized company, a Foundation in his name, a gala opening and the prospect of a world tour.

You might be suspicious. Clark's progress has been hurried along by the most extravagant publicity campaign that a brilliant management team could produce. And certain of his interests — pop, camp and rudery — promise immediate sell.

But Clark is also the most brilliant British dancer of this generation; his work isn't simply the fashionable burlesque that the new public, lured in to see it, might have been misled to expect. Usually, it earns a mixed response: a certain enthusiam, yes, but also a certain confusion. It has a complexity that is challenging: its imagery is diverse and



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fragmented, its choreography often packed with pure dance information.

The danger is that Clark's struggle as an emerging choreographer has to take place under the spotlight rather than in studio privacy. He withstands a punishing schedule for turning out pieces and, usually, his ambitions are several strides ahead of his realisations.

The promising feature is that Clark seems wise enough to take stock of his failures. This year's *Swamp* for Ballet Rambert, his most mature work so far, was the culmination of his experiments in abstraction. Now, *No Fire Escape in Hell* is the best conceived work in the more media-eclectic vein that he prefers for his own company.

*No Fire Escape* is a more serious work, less an overt mockery of his dance and cultural heritage than usual. It is a work in memory of Clark's self-destructive friend and erstwhile designer Trojan. In the programme, beneath a quotation from Jung about the great 'principles' that entangle us, there is a note: 'Way out was his way in.' Clark reads an 'Ode to T' and flies Trojan's fried egg (which the latter designed for Charles Atlas' C4 Clark documentary). Also included are references to police harassment of homosexuals, dark images of the world that Clark himself also inhabits.

Act 2 is filled with allusions to other artists who suffered untimely deaths: Mama Cass, an Earth Mother producing a clutch of 'youngsters' from under her voluminous skirt; John Lennon with Yoko Ono from their 'stay in bed' days, emerging like Adam-and-Eve innocents from under a Union Jack; Elvis; others.

True, in Act I, a policeman's truncheon grossly transforms into an instrument of sexual pleasure rather than terror. And Clark has included his famous wanking and castration solo, the only choreography retrieved from the past. And the dancers in Act II have crudely painted genitalia on their flesh-coloured bodysuits, occasionally sporting additional plastic buttocks, boobs and bellies. But this constant subversion could be Clark's method of maintaining his rate of surprise and of avoiding sentimentality. Then, too, it provides a contrast to his uncompromising and extended Act III, making its endeavour more impressive. 'Now Gods' is a hell of demons dancing a sort of black rite with grim vitality and the sinister capture of an additional soul, all to the barks and roars of the live upstage rock group Laibach, with utterances in German and blasphemies against the Ordinary of the Mass.

The tireless *No Fire Escape* all but tumbles over itself with ideas, a panoply of images juxtaposed and jarring, some confusing, some irritating, many magical.

Clark has attracted a number of eager and highly talented collaborators to devise this dangerous assortment: the rock mix of old friends like The Fall and Bruce Gilbert and some new, Drostan Madden, Simon Rogers and, especially welcome, the aforementioned Laibach from Yugoslavia. You're rarely so inundated with such wickedly inventive and vivid props and costumes: body revealing, extending or disguising. Fashion designers Bodymap are largely responsible, Leigh Bowery, as usual, joins in, and the lighting by Atlas makes a major contribution to the cabaret tactics and nightmare of the piece.

The framework of *No Fire Escape* is not a choreographic one, but there is a good deal of dancing. Not surprisingly, created so fast (in nine weeks), there are several numbers which go for little or nothing and several parts of the stage activity that look uncultivated. In these respects, the last act, which contains the most pure dance, is sometimes marred by longueur.

Nonetheless, the exceptional quality that we saw in *Swamp* is frequently manifest: in Clark's prologue solo, an exquisite combination of embryonic awkwardness and classicism, or in the funeral cortege that ends Act II, Clark languishing in elegant widow's weeds supported down a noble diagonal and striking out from it in a series of ironic cadenzas. Timing and articulation make the ordinary extraordinary.

Again, perhaps through lack of time, Clark hasn't revealed the individuality of his dancers as much as he has assured the revelation of his own: the special gifts of his most experienced dancers, Joseph Lennon and Ellen van Schuylenburch, were missing. But, as a team, they serve the work very well — and better, too, as the season has progressed.

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# A, B, C . . . X

Naseem Khan

FEW BOOKS have attracted such fury as did, last week, a children's picture book. 'Grossly offensive,' declared Education Secretary Kenneth Baker roundly. 'Blatant homosexual propaganda.' He was followed by predictably outraged tabloids calling for a ban on 'VILE BOOKS IN SCHOOL'.

To meet the real *Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin* was, after this, a surprise. It is really not an unreasonable book. It's about a small girl who lives with her gay father and his lover and, on the whole, follows the ordinary events of their lives through photographs: Martin collects Jenny from school; they make a surprise cake for Eric's birthday; they play Lotto, go to the laundrette. On Sunday — and it's these photos that have most inflamed the critics — Jenny urges Eric and Martin to get up (or, as one paper put it, is seen 'trying to wake up her daddy and his boy friend as they lie in "gay" abandon'). In fact she sits on their bed with her doll reading a book, but the scene has raised hallucinatory visions of unbashed sex.

The book is at pains to explain homosexuality — particularly when Jenny is troubled by the hostility of a neighbour. 'They think it is strange for two men to live together, because it isn't very common,' Martin and Eric carefully tell her. It neither advocates it nor repudiates it. And, although it has its faults — it tries to encompass too much for the age-group at which it is aimed; it has Jenny's mother visiting but leaves her non-presence otherwise unexplained — they are not faults of irresponsibility or perversion. Nor, despite the impression given, is it being thrust on ILEA pupils. It's not kept on open shelves, said a spokesperson for its publisher Gay Men's Press (though some boroughs might make an exception); it's used as a resource book by teachers when the situation demands. Even so, it's obviously not been in huge demand. It's just selling out its 3,000 print order after about three years: hardly a huge propaganda exercise.

In short, if there were ever doubts about the need for a reasoned critique of children's books, the Jenny case would answer them — which makes it an extraordinarily apt time for the announcement of The Other Award*, the annual alternative award for children's books whose purpose is to provide just such a critique. Started 11 years ago by a group of friends who wanted to see the criteria of progressive literature applied to children's books, it has gradually established itself as an award worth having: not for the money (there is none) but for the kudos and, in some proven cases, increased sales.

The Other Award functions in a special way. The initiative, for a start, doesn't come from publishers. The Other Award panel does not take submissions; it considers the breadth of work produced for children in a year and judges accordingly. There are no special categories (Best Adventure, Best Poetry, etc.); everything is considered. But there are hard and fast guidelines. At the head come quality and accessibility. Then come the 'credible depiction of all people', historical accuracy and values that do not condone greed, competitiveness and hierarchies.

Fittingly, there is no one overall winner. What they want to do, says Stones, is to encourage critical debate on children's books, not just hand out Brownie points.

The reputation of children's books is, currently, a high one — and The Other Award serves as an excellent litmus paper for the changes that have taken place (or haven't) in writing for children.

There are books that got awards in the 70s that would, says Stones, get nowhere today. *Helpers* by Shirley Hughes, a jolly picture book about a day in which some children are looked after by a male cousin, covered new ground in 1976. Not now. At the same time, the improvement has been sporadic. As recently as 1980, Stones reports, the panel was hunting vainly for new non-sexist books. It managed to find *Mrs Plug the Plumber* ('that was almost scraping the barrel'). Last year, however, it found itself faced with an array of wonderful books: 'There was *Vila* by Sarah Baylis, for instance, a terrific feminist novel for teenagers, and *Homelands* and many more.'

It is easy with awards and lists of recommendations to see them as the authorised version, like a diet sheet to be stuck to exclusively for perfect health: a dangerous tendency, for censorship comes in many guises. Rosemary Stones herself believes that people should read omnivorously. '*King Solomon's Mines* may be "ideologically unsound",' she says, 'but it's an invaluable historical insight into imperialist attitudes (and a good yarn)'. School books, pony stories and teenage romances have, she considers, been wrongly rubbished — 'They've got a great range of girl characters in them actually *doing* things' — while fairy stories answer a need, still largely unmet in contemporary young people's fiction, for fantasising myths. 'I'm very worried by the idea that you can keep people in a cultural vacuum and I think I'm beginning to get a whiff of that now.' The Other Award is a guide to thought, not a substitute for it. □

**The Other Award winners were announced (or will be announced, depending when you read this) at 6.30 on 25 September at the Festival Hall.*

*Work in Progress will be on holiday for the next two weeks.*

## THEATRE

# Put asunder

Victoria Radin

**The Bay at Nice** and **Wrecked Eggs**
DAVID HARE *Cottesloe*

IN KEEPING WITH his fondness for foreign climes, David Hare has set these two conversation pieces in Russia and in the USA respectively. The Leningrad of *The Bay at Nice* is dated 1956, the year of the occupation of Hungary and, presumably, the dawn of an era of greater restrictions on personal liberty. *Wrecked Eggs* — the title refers to a character's assessment of her culinary skills but may have something to do with revolutions, hopes and marriages — takes place in New York State in the present, more a condition of mind than a setting, characterised by a denial of the past. In both plays Hare is concerned with countries, and people, who try to obliterate their histories: each links a marital break-up to the erosion of a wider moral order.

In *Bay at Nice* the heroine (superbly played by Irene Worth with just a hint of a foreign accent) is, as a former student of Matisse in Paris during the Belle Epoque, a repository of recent Western history. Elegant and contemptuous of Soviet austerities, Valentina has been invited to an unnamed museum, presumably the Hermitage, by a young polyester-suited card-carrying and careerist assistant curator (Colin Stinton) to authenticate the painting of Hare's title as a genuine Matisse.

Like all of Hare's plays — or, indeed, any work which questions moral standards — this is basically a piece about authenticity: what constitutes a true work of art? love? decent work? a valid life? and the author's characteristic urge to stop the action and offer us his well shaped thoughts (love, says Valentina, is 'a bet placed by two shivering tramps at the racetrack') seems more obtrusive than in his larger plays. His heroines, however, are infinitely more appealing and recognisably of humankind. Sophia (Zoë Wanamaker), Valentina's homely and plodding daughter (conceived in one of those Parisian moments of 'lying around in beds with men in studios' and a thorn in the formerly unfettered maternal flesh ever since), arrives in the hope of enlisting her mother's help in her divorce from her 'model husband of the State'. She introduces Valentina to her new lover (Phillip Locke), a tall, gentle, aged and improbable suitor who toils on the outskirts of upward mobility for the sanitation department. After many savage utterances on Sophia's person, her amateur and merely 'photographic' painting, her lack of ambition and misapprehensions of love, Valentina most implausibily offers to sell her own flat to pay for her daughter's divorce. Then, alone, she removes the drapes from the painting and, from her expression and her series of happy feints round it (almost a matador's with a bull),



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we know the picture to be the real thing: a relic, we suppose, of an age of idealism, when personal definitions of freedom and discipline weren't state-controlled.

We also feel public beliefs to be controlling private lives in Reagan's America — or Hare's idea of Reagan's America — in *Wrecked Eggs*. Here Wanamaker, most wonderfully, and Stinton, as wonderfully as can be expected with his doodle of a part, play versions of their previous characters. Grace is a disaffected public relations representative, a veteran of many affairs and only slightly fewer abortions. We may recognise her as a descendant of *Plenty*'s Susan Traherne: a rather romantic and non-aligned investigator of the why of things, who earns her living by dirtying her hands in Hare's detested journalism. I would have said that Loelia, one half of the couple whom Grace visits in a posh poolside house along the Hudson River, shares some of Grace's quest, if Hare, who directs these works himself in typically stylised and formal manner, hadn't made Kate Bufferey's character a tennis coach who pads about in running shorts and speaks in a soap-opera drawl.

It emerges that Loelia wishes to separate from her husband Robbie, a work-crazed lawyer who has changed his name and become a baseball-loving super-patriot in an attempt to erase his personal history, which includes a father who was a famous spy. Robbie equates patriotism with success, success with money, money with safety: 'Money doesn't bullshit. The great thing is — money is straight.' Loelia has her own form of worship: 'Sex is the one thing that never lets you down.'

These are hardly blindingly new, or useful, ways to look at Americans, and Hare wastes a lot of time in familiar satire. Loelia is an ex-hippy who used to 'fuck anything in jeans'; she is also a Buddhist who goes to classes in croissant-making at the New School. Robbie has a way with cooking soft-shell crabs and finds death 'very negative'. This weekend they are holding a 'splitting-up party' to mark the 'rite of passage'.

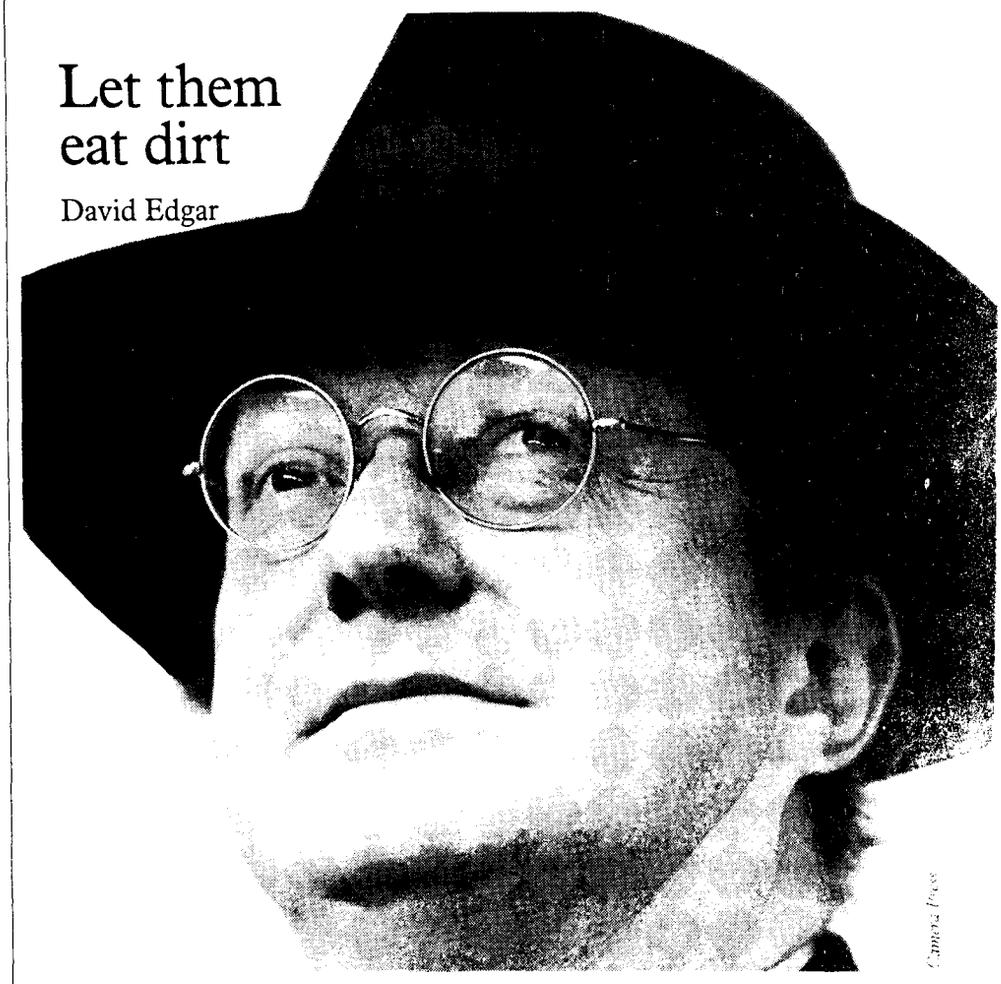
Such is their unlikely life that Grace, an acquaintance of Loelia's for a couple of weeks through the tennis, is the only person to show up. However, in this self-proclaimed 'heretic' — and in Zoë Wanamaker's sympathetic performance — Hare has created a person who does tell us a bit about life in New York: young lovers who turn nasty, property developers who want to tear down blocks of 'life' and a cult of personality which never asks, 'Is he right?', but, 'What's he like?' 'Everyone behaves as if everything's normal,' muses Grace.

She could be anyone in a large city anywhere; and I wonder, apart from its vein of satirical possibilities, why Hare chose New York rather than our own London Yuppieland. Yet, in Grace and in Valentina, Hare has been able to find a gentler, less hysterical female embodiment of his own moral quest than he was able to deliver in the heroines of *Plenty* and of *Map of the World*, respectively mad and inane. Though these two plays show him still to be more interested in ideas than in character, I find them much more attractive than those earlier works and, perhaps, evidence of a new direction. □



# Let them eat dirt

David Edgar



Camera Press

**Another Voice: An Alternative Anatomy of Britain**
AUBERON WAUGH *Sidgwick* £9.95

IN ONE OF HIS diverting *Private Eye* diaries, Auberon Waugh announced that he'd been asked to chair a meeting of British revolutionary leaders, to be held, if memory serves, in the Hyde Park Hotel.

As the world knows, Waugh's diary was in fact a work of semi-fiction, in which the articulation of the author's views was both alternated with and expressed through a narrative often, though not necessarily, involving real people, which purported to consist of actual episodes culled from day-to-day life. This use of private chronicle as a medium for polemic had precisely the opposite effect from that, say, achieved in Swift's 'Modest Proposal': far from the fiction intensifying the passion of the argument, the mendacity of the annal served to diminish the credibility of the opinion, not least via the reader's understandable fear of being caught out twice. And, if both story and sentiment are suspect, then the diarist himself becomes ontologically dubious, not Waugh but 'Waugh', a thing of wisps, an optical illusion.

This problem shouldn't arise with Waugh's weekly columns in the *Spectator*, a little under a hundred of which are now anthologised. But, even here, it's hard not to feel the presence of invisible quote-marks hovering impishly over the elegant logo. Not for nothing is the column called 'Another Voice' and the book subtitled 'An Alternative Anatomy of Britain': both clearly evoke *Private Eye*'s own 'Alternative Voice', the 'fearless and outspoken' Dave Spart, who expresses the dreariest of left commonplaces in the most crassly incoherent terms. Similarly, Waugh's familiar blend of bucolic spite and ultramontane prejudice has, for the most part, long since ceased to be remotely controversial (as he himself unhappily admits) and it's now only the chosen manner, the constant flavour of pastiche, which remains even faintly individual. Perhaps, indeed, both column and book could be more aptly titled 'Another Tone'.

All of which makes it hard for even a conscientious reviewer to do much more than shrug, smile and wave. (Waugh himself advises him or her merely to read the introduction, which summarises the rest of the book in the manner of a theatrical dumbshow.) But, in fact, Waugh's view of the world is more important than it appears to be, in that, whether he likes it or not, his angle on things represents an increasingly significant trend in the New Conservatism. It is not the now somewhat passé cocktail of disciplinary and libertarian attitudes that makes Waugh an ideological market leader (indeed, he's retreated from all that a bit and his polemic against the Waffen-FCS Line on heroin is not only rather well-argued but could apply equally well to his position on drunk driving, particularly for a man so adept at ad absurdity). No, Waugh's importance lies in his best-



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known clutch of opinions, those which appear to be most obviously affected by a touch of the only-doing-it-to-annoys: his attitudes to class.

The initial strategy of Thatcherite Conservatism toward the working masses was a strange refraction of the Marxist doctrine of false consciousness. The theory was that the proletariat had been blinded to its true interests by a combination of collectivist propaganda, corrupt if not Bolshevik leadership and material pressures (the best example being the way council house rental inhibited the free movement of labour). And the solution was equally simple: disarm and isolate the militants, sell off the council houses (and shares in the telephone company) and the natural, capitalist consciousness of the working class would emerge, blinking, into the light of day.

In order to bring off this trick, it was necessary to make an important conceptual distinction. One of the many problems of the false consciousness theory is that it has to cope with those sections of the working class whose commitment to the status quo cannot be entirely explained by even the subtlest machinations of the craven reformists in the Labour bureaucracies; similarly, the Tory Turn to the Class had somehow to sidestep those sections of the oppressed masses who were obviously too alienated to be susceptible to even the most tempting entrepreneurial blandishments. Hence the highly successful Thatcherite endeavour to Americanise people's conception of the working class: to detach the full-time employed proletariat from the part-time or unemployed section and invent (or, rather, import) a new vocabulary — 'the inner cities', 'the underclass' — to define the latter. And, again as in America, this construct could be given a covertly racial twist, since the inhabitants of this newly discovered country seemed (well, most of them) to be foreign, or to be living with foreigners, or too old, tired and miserable to move away.

What threatened this model was not just the fightback of the miners (fully employed, far from even the outer reaches of the towns), but also the alliance between them and elements of the urban culture in the Miners Support Groups. Further, the fact that the GLC's support for feminism and the black struggle appeared at the very least not to reduce its working-class appeal raised the spectre of a Labour movement culturally and politically revived by the energies of the underclass — a development confirmed by the Labour Party's own electoral revival. Worst of all, the wave of public sympathy for the defeated miners as they trooped back to the pitheads indicated that the hold of traditional loyalties and empathies was a great deal stronger than it had looked in 1979 or 1983; that the Unmaking of the British Working Class was going to take a lot more than the humiliation of a few TUC bureaucrats, the odd cut-price mortgage and a share or two.

One of the most striking features of the last [illegible] years has been the revival of a kind of blatant, rancorous class contempt unseen in most of our lifetimes, directed not just against the blacks, the single parents or the unemployed (always fair game) but against the proletariat as a whole. In a piece too recent for inclusion in this book, Waugh himself drew what he saw as the vital lessons of the events at the Heysel football stadium in May 1985:

> Neither the 'workers', nor their sycophants on the sensitive fringes of the middle-class have any alibis on this occasion. It was not the blacks who chased 31 terrified Italians to their deaths, nor was it the National Front, nor was the group hooliganism sanctified by being in furtherance of an industrial dispute. None of these Merseyside 'animals' was poor and few, apparently, were unemployed. They were quite simply our wonderful, overpaid 'workers' on a spree. (*Spectator*, 8 June 1985).

What is remarkable about the last couple of years is the way in which such ideas — albeit not always so unambiguously nor so gleefully expressed — have themselves become commonplace. What is striking about *Another Voice* is that Auberon Waugh has held, and has been expressing, such views for so long. On the book's cover is a drawing of the author, standing with a glass of wine in a sort of pillared folly, in front of what at first sight appears to be a domed Town Hall, its windows smashed, its roof burning, its broken cupola crazily skewed and its windows festooned with the political emblems of urban life, from the National Front to Socialist Workers, from 'Wimmin' to 'Punks' and 'Yobs'. But the drawing is misleading on two counts. First, as is clear from the book, Waugh's main target is really none of these trends or manifestations (try as he might to indulge in fashionable misogyny, or modish racialism, his heart is really not in it). Second, as the American edition reveals, the classic pile is not really a public building at all. There, the book is called *Brideshead Benighted* and, over that title, the cover illustration appears in a whole new light. It is nothing less than Waugh's own country seat, his birthright, his private inheritance, occupied and squatted by his hated working class, or, put another way, the majority of his fellows, of all colours and both sexes.

Had Waugh actually taken the chair at an assemblage attended by Tony Cliffe, Ted Grant and Gerry Healy (for these were happier and more innocent days), he could have given them a simple message: that an element at least of the impetus behind Thatcherism was to be nothing to do with the release of vital new entrepreneurial energies, but was all about the reassertion of the most ancient of privileges, the most crude and atavistic of class hatreds. That the restitution of seignorial authority is not the *whole* of the New Conservatism shouldn't blind us to the fact that it's a part and we should, I suppose, be grateful to 'Bron' for so consistently reminding us. □

## Resolve

Stephen Romer

With the problem of the jeune fille
the cosmos and my life to reconcile,

I sat down gravely in a neutral bar
to chew the bread of things as they are

and drink the bitter blackest coffee
ever served by Dame Philosophy,

the grey mistress of severities,
keeper of the pincers, ought and is,

that hold us wriggling in our condition.
Be practical, she said. My consolation

is in your ecstasy when you abandon
hope, and there's nothing to be done.

As for the girl, forget her
and start afresh. A minute later

I tried this out: starting now, I am made
anew. Starting now, I shall conclude

this matter, pay my bill and enter life.
Starting now. It cannot be put off.

— One more coffee then. I shall prevail,
resolved at last. There's just a detail:

am I changed or not, if I tell this tale?

# Technical knockout

Glyn Ford

**Post Innovation Performance: Technological Development and Competition**
LUKE GEORGHIOU *et al Macmillan* £29.50

BRITAIN SINCE THE 19th century has been in accelerating industrial decline and, for much of this century, the explorers of ideas have been seeking the cause. At different times and in different politics almost everyone has been blamed: the workers, the managers, the politicians. In some cases the whole culture has been blamed, while, in others, the finger has been pointed at the wily sneak thief who spirits the products of British inventive genius to the Far East. No single answer will suffice. Here another is implicitly on offer.

*Post Innovation Performance* is the result of a re-evaluation by a group from Manchester University of a series of innovations that were initially analysed in 1972 in *Wealth from Knowledge* (Langrish *et al*, Macmillan). The innovations studied were those of firms that won the Queen's Award to Industry in 1966 and 1967. In total, 35 case studies are included, ranging from the Chorleywood bread process to the Seacat guided weapons system, from the Severn Bridge to sterilisation by irradiation. The object of the study is not to look at the moment of discovery, rather to see the innovation process as a stone dropped in the industrial pond, creating potential opportunities and challenges for a considerable time. Successful ongoing innovation is a dialogue between technological opportunity and market need, where the



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trajectory of technical change is determined by industry's view of what future supply and demand will be.

The book limits itself to Britain, with its unique pattern of R&D emphasising military research to an extent unmatched elsewhere in the Western World. Nevertheless, some general conclusions can be drawn. First, technological competition is a continual process, whereby individual firms have to manoeuvre to allow for changing customer requirements, breaking into new segments of the market and incorporating external improvements in component technology. In general British firms do not pay enough attention to this post-innovative phase of refinement and improvement. The result is that those who start the race might find themselves overtaken by their competitors. Second, capacity to innovate depends on profit margin, market share, level of technical performance and access to finance. The continued ability to refine innovations rests in the knowledge, skills and experience of those working in a firm, while its achievement depends on access to capital.

Clearly, post-innovative performance, or the lack of it, offers another partial explanation for Britain's continued industrial decline under late capitalism. The authors may not agree, but a number of points stand out in this book that suggest the need for intervention by a future Labour government. Certainly, the Wilsonian hammer approach of merely 'more' is too indelicate and inefficient to be a useful tool. Sharper instruments will have to be used. One must be to shape the technological trajectory by setting industrial perceptions of future demand, instead of leaving them to the hidden hand of shared assumptions within the establishment. If nothing changes, it will not be a search for the causes of industrial decline that will need to be conducted, but a post-mortem. □

*Glyn Ford is a Member of the European Parliament*

## SCIENCE FICTION

# Past futures

Josephine Saxton

FOR NOSTALGIC SF fans whose beloved collections are worn to shreds, it will be glad news that Gollancz has brought out four more in its Classic series: **The Reproductive System** by John Sladek, **The Door into Summer** by Robert A. Heinlein, **Wolfbane** by Frederick Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth, and Arthur C. Clarke's **The City and the Stars** (£2.95 each). I would not recommend them, however, to new readers, the general level of writing being far from classic, the kind of thing which has made sf a self-repeating genre of sometimes vivid ideas and no literary merit. The best is John Sladek's because it has some humour, but all have a dated mustiness — which could enhance their value to collectors of kitsch-litsch.

What is worse, some of Gollancz's new books have the same redolence: like contemporary 'Fifties' furniture, sprouting apparently functional knobs which were, originally, only part of a love affair with atom models.

Such a one is Frederick Pohl's **Black Star Rising** (£9.95), which takes place in a future of Asian Superpowers where an alien spaceship arrives and beams in with 'take me to your leader' — or, at least, to the President of the United States. An American peasant is found to act stand-in (by a series of coincidences at which Thomas Hardy would have scoffed), thus giving the author a chance to play about with a *lumpen* mishmash of political humour and some ropey sexual relationships which seem to be more territorial than amorous. Getting off one lot of rocks and onto another. The blurb states: 'Sharply satiric and highly entertaining.' Phooey.

More original is a somewhat turgid 1978 Joanna Russ, **The Two of Them** (Women's Press, £2.25), which I missed first time round. Years ago, in a ferment of consciousness raising, I more or less forced a man to read Russ's *The Female Man* and then eagerly awaited the changed being. 'Bah! I've heard it all before!' he snarled (indeed he had, from me) and hurled it across the room, thus proving the penis mightier than the pen. But the years must have changed me; I could almost have done the same to *The Two of Them*, except that I became fascinated: not with her characters, although they are vivid; not with her plot (outlaw heroine rescues little girl from drugged future to become Great Poet); not with her futurist Arabian Nights 'planet'; but with the quandary of how she would resolve yet another battle between the sexes. The chap's main fault seems to be an inability to concentrate when continually examined with regard to sex-roles. Well, deaf ears can be irritating and a woman's gotta do what a woman's gotta do, so she shoots him. And then steals the Shirley Temple kid, leaving behind a snivelling male brat (the kid's only friend) to be reared as an oppressive male. I do not find this at all satisfactory. The last two pages are brilliant, though, lacking the bitterness and archness which mar the tone of the whole.

Refreshingly devoid of any serious social, moral, human or extra-terrestrial issue, Jane Palmer's **The Watcher** (Women's Press, £2.50) flips lightly around the adventures of an Asian teenage girl with no nerves, helped along by a Benson-from-*Soap* character and an ugly baddie who gets fried by the power source he is trying to steal. If the baddies succeed then an entire planet of one-parent families with wings will perish; but, fear not, most of the action takes place in English villages by the sea. It has the tone of early Eric Frank Russell and a style reminiscent of Enid Blyton and would help the brain-fevered convalescence of those who have just read William Gibson's collection of short stories **Burning Chrome** (Gollancz, £8.95).

Gibson's worlds may owe much to slick


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detective stories, the scenery and atmosphere of *Bladerunner* (and thereby Philip K. Dick), but they are the most convincing, vivid, real and weird of anything I have read recently, in or out of the sf package. His continuum is always within a photon's width of here and now, but he consistently shows that, for strange, you do not need monotonous monsters in any space. His future humans chill sufficiently — although he does have that overworked sf standby creature, the dolphin, lurking in a tank. His dolphin is a junkie; I could have wept at his lack of sentimentality. 'Red Star, Winter Orbit' says more about global politics than Fred Pohl ever thought of and 'Johnny Mnemonic' got me so tense with its truly hallucinatory predictions of how technology will be used in streetwise societies that I went into the garden to get some air (I didn't say this stuff was *pleasant*). 'The Winter Market', while being the story of every exploited female star, is much more, with imagery which seeps into the subconscious. Read it and discover why I almost bought a certain kind of jacket until I woke up.

Jody Scott's **I, Vampire** (Women's Press, £2.50) did not keep me awake all night reading. Scott has skill, energy and knowledge, but there seems to be no real target for her frequent punches and the jargon and amphetamine pace obscure her ideas in a spray of heartless violence. Gibson is also vile and violent, but this stuff seems, unlike his, gratuitous. I hope I am not being sexist in saying that women do not need to prove they can write vicious, bloody scenes as well as any man, and for fun. Anyway, Scott can.

On reading for the second time **Ice** (Peter Owen, £8.95) by Anna Kavan, I was full of admiration for its perfect proportions, crystal style and clairvoyant idea. It has a strange hopefulness in its bleak pages; to say it was Kafkaesque or sf would be to minimise a *true* classic. □

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**FICTION**

# Sugar and spice

Ruth Baumgarten

**Perfume**
PATRICK SUSKIND *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95

PATRICK SUSKIND'S FIRST novel comes here accompanied by the full blast of its publisher's fanfares. These announce it as the new Umberto Eco, a 'serious' (continental) historical novel meeting equally with critical rapture and middle-brow mass appeal. In the year since its domestic publication it hasn't budged once from the German bestseller chart.

But where the appeal of Eco's *Name of the Rose* lay in its complex twisting of detective plot with theological and political debates and history lessons, Suskind's novel looks more like an attempt to flesh a pun out into an allegory. In German, the expression 'I can't smell x' is common parlance for disliking somebody. Suskind's novel charts the progress of the fictional, French, 18th-century parfumier Jean Baptiste Grenouille, whose body from birth doesn't give any odour off at all. Nobody can smell him. Not even he can smell himself.

Born into an almost unbelievably smelly Paris, where rotting meat and vegetables blend into the stench of unwashed bodies, chamber-pots and a multitude of stinking artisans' yards, Grenouille does indeed stand out. But, as though to compensate for his own unsmellability, his sense of smell is magically overdeveloped. Grenouille can smell money through walls, can identify people in an adjacent room and find his way in the blackest night guided by his nose alone. His nose also shows him the way out of a miserable, unloved slum-childhood into an apprenticeship with Paris' most famous parfumier. But only when — by chance — he finds the perfect scent, that of a pubescent girl stoning plums, does he discover his true vocation and the meaning of his life: to find a way to recreate and preserve beauty as an odour.

In order to capture the smell of young girls — which Suskind, with no outstanding originality, elevates to the incarnation of beauty — Grenouille has to kill them first. And this is where Suskind's bewitchingly simple idea comes unstuck. Suskind hasn't thought through how the sense of smell could work as a metaphor not only for the invisible ties which link human beings, and thus make them aware of themselves, but also as a metaphor for any artistic production. The sense of smell under-used and under-rationalised in the business of daily orientation could indeed illuminate how the arts step back from the world and re-engage with it, recreating it entirely with the confines of one single faculty: hearing, vision or speech.

Instead Suskind has opted for a historical fantasy with a hit-or-miss plot which only now and then picks out aspects of its subject matter, relishing rather the plunge into an imaginary past's everyday smells. The novel truly comes to life when it can pretend to be part of this past, describing the crowded, still mediaeval Pont Neuf in Paris with its wealth of trades almost unthinkable in our days of streamlined production.

That this baroque world of sensual thrills yields nothing better than young girls and May mornings as images of beauty is unfortunately in keeping with the novel's love-love-me-do morality, teaching us that babies need cuddling, that power alone won't bring happiness. □

**FICTION**

# Ghost writers

Boyd Tonkin

**Winner Takes All**
DIETER WELLERSHOFF
trans. PAUL KNIGHT *Carcanet* £9.95
**Across**
PETER HANDKE
trans. RALPH MANHEIM *Methuen* £9.95.

A FEW YEARS back, when streetwise critics picked up a taste for high theory and low cunning, the worst insult you could throw at some plausible piece of fiction was to call it a '19th-century novel'. Dieter Wellershoff's **Winner Takes All** would no doubt fall under this dread rubric. If so, come back Victorian values: all (well, quite a bit) is forgiven.

Despite the bright light of detail it casts over West German society, from the Economic Miracle to the Red Army Fraction, the scope and structure of *Winner Takes All* bring to mind the tragic realism of an earlier age. For Wellershoff takes as his subject the crossroads where capitalism and private life meet. This unholy junction turns out to be a place of sharpened stakes, shallow graves and howling spirits.

During the first rumbles of Germany's post-war boom, a drifting student, Ulrich Vogtmann, catches the boss's eye in the course of his menial job in a condensed milk factory. Quickly he discovers the poetry of money and the art of acquisition: 'Money dissolved everything that appeared solid into movement . . . It was the universal machine that set all other machines in motion.' Like any rising young man from a high bourgeois epic, Ulrich marries his employer's daughter. The patriarch Pattberg remains at root a rich peasant, while Ulrich pushes his food business



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into the era of posh delis and sprawling hypermarkets. As ambition, love and politics entwine he fights the *angst* that afflicts new capital indebted to old land: 'He was still the man without property, the man who had married into wealth, who had brought in nothing but himself.'

Sliding between wife and mistress down the endless pine-fringed *autobahnen*, Ulrich watches Germany change and its youth — including his shoplifting son — turn against their parents' hollowness. Clutching at everything, he can hold on to nothing.

Nemesis, when it arrives, is fast and squalid. Ulrich overreaches himself in a crooked scam, trying to sell insecticidal capsules to war-torn Zaire. For the second time in modern fiction, European traders project into that region the heart of darkness that lies within themselves. *Winner Takes All* starts and finishes in a scene of fluorescent horror worthy of Fassbinder. Now a bankrupt cadger, Ulrich dies in anguish at a hotel that comes to represent the gleaming new Germany in all its shiftiness and ostentation. Like his country's repressed memories, the corpse is hustled out of sight down the emergency stairs.

Any callow radical can launch a critique of possessive individualism from a safe moral distance; too many still do. But Wellershoff's writing never delivers a judgment where it can dramatise a contradiction. He explores the self-estrangement at the core of the entrepreneurial ethic. Ever eager to fix the future and cancel the past, Ulrich fails to build a home in the present. Few recent novels have grasped as well as *Winner Takes All* the ambiguous pleasure of accumulation: the half-erotic, half-aesthetic thrill that drives Ulrich to clinch his deals. We need fiction of this quality to unravel the ties that bind passion to profit, since we'll find no comment in the *FT*.

More middle-European malaise breaks out in **Across**, Peter Handke's short novel of an *acte gratuit* in a Salzburg suburb. A solitary classics teacher, Andreas Loser, kills the painter of swastika graffiti he disturbs during a nocturnal walk.

Loser doubts that this is a political deed. Sunk in solipsism, separated from his family and on leave from his job, his undetected murder marks a transition on whose meaning Handke lyrically broods. Joining the 'nation of criminals' both intensifies Loser's life and foreshadows his death: 'A part of me had fallen off the cliff with the stoned man. I was no longer among the players, or else I was playing a different game . . .'

*Across* deals with thresholds of many kinds: between normality and pathology, speech and silence; between cultures, countries and histories. As precise and slow-moving as its hero, Handke's prose meditates on crossings and passages in a style that owes as much to phenomenology as mainstream fiction. In some mysterious and memorable sections, Handke crosses over into the territory of Heidegger, of Derrida, or of the unclassifiable insights in a work such as Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*. Like these, he never ceases to wonder at everyday language and the experience it both carries and betrays.

This diet of rapt perception might strike some readers as a mite frugal. Compared to Wellershoff's thick paint, Handke does use a thinner medium. Yet similar images of emptiness, transit and oblivion crowd each book. Though they take different routes, both writers are stalking the unquiet ghosts of modern European culture. □

## OBITUARY

# Charlotte Wolff

Gary Pulsifer

THE PSYCHIATRIST Charlotte Wolff led an extremely active life until her death this 12 September at the age of 88. One of the few survivors of the Weimar Republic — the last? — Charlotte Wolff was highly regarded for her original, if unorthodox, approach to human sexuality (especially homosexuality). Over the decades she came into contact with many of the famous names of the 20th century, numbering as friends Aldous Huxley, André Breton, and Antoine Saint-Exupery.

Charlotte Wolff was born in the eastern German town of Riesenburg, near Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland). She studied phenomenology under Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl and received her MD from Berlin University in 1928. While in Berlin (and later in Paris) she made a study of handreading and gesture, which culminated in *The Humand Hand* (1942), *A Psychology of Gesture* (1945) and *The Hand in Psychological Diagnosis* (1952).

As a Jew and free-thinker, life in Germany became increasingly oppressive for Dr Wolff. In common with other Jewish people, she was dismissed from her hospital job in February 1933; later that spring she was arrested by the Gestapo (but was almost immediately released) and found that her flat had been searched for bombs. On 26 May, 1933 she departed Germany for good and settled first in Paris and then, three years later, in London. Aldous and Maria Huxley were instrumental in assisting her to settle in London and, through them, Charlotte Wolff met Thomas Mann, Osbert Sitwell, T.S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf among others.

Her writing includes *Love Between Women* (1971) and *Bisexuality* (1979), two studies of sexuality. Two volumes of autobiography appeared: *On The Way To Myself* (1979) which in Charlotte Wolff's own words was 'an autobiography with a difference. I selected those aspects of my life which showed the correlation between creativity and outer events'; and *Hindsight* (1980). Charlotte Wolff was also the author of *An Older Love*, a novel (1976). While in her eighties she undertook a project of six years' duration: a biography of the German sexologist *Magnus Hirschfeld*, which was published earlier this year. Penny Grant of Quartet, her publisher, says: 'Charlotte had a great sense of humour; she was a humanitarian and was forever looking forward to the future.' Perhaps that is how we should remember this remarkable woman, too. □

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# Selected Autumn and Winter Books

*The books listed below are a selection from those which publishers hope to issue between now and the end of March 1987*

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HEINRICH BOLL **The Casualty** *Chatto* £9.95
MALCOLM BRADBURY **Cuts** *Hutchinson* £7.95
ALAN BRIEN **Lenin: A Novel** *Heinemann* £10.95
TRUMAN CAPOTE **Answered Prayers** *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95
ROALD DAHL **Two Fables** *Viking* £5.95
ANNE DEVLIN **The Way Paver** *Faber* £9.95
MAUREEN DUFFY **Change** *Methuen* about £9.95
SUSAN FROMBERG SCHAEFFER **The Injured Party** *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95
ELLEN GILCHRIST **Drunk With Love** *Faber* about £9.95
DES HOGAN **A New Shirt** *Hamish Hamilton* £10.95
KERI HULME **Te Kaihau: The Windeater** *Hodder* £9.95
JAMES KELMAN **Greyhound for Breakfast** *Secker* £9.95
KEN KESEY **Demon Box** *Methuen* £10.95
MILAN KUNDERA **Life is Elsewhere** *Faber* £9.95
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'. . . the credentials are excellent: the two of them are such fine minds on the subject . . . a marvellously important book, I think, on this subject at this time – because they are looking at things which haven't really been looked at by others.' Donald Woods, *Meridian* programme

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ALICE MUNRO **The Progress of Love** *Chatto* £9.95
V. S. NAIPAUL **The Enigma of Arrival** *Viking* £10.95
JOYCE CAROL OATES **Marya: A Life** *Cape* £10.95
PHILIP ROTH **The Counterlife** *Cape* £9.95
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SIMONE SIGNORET **Adieu Volodia** *Macmillan* £10.95
CHRISTINA STEAD **I'm Dying Laughing** *Virago* £10.95
PAUL THEROUX **O-zone** *Hamish Hamilton* £10.95
MICHEL TOURNIER **Gilles & Jeanne** *Methuen* £7.95
JOHN UPDIKE **Roger's Version** *Deutsch* £9.95
MARIO VARGAS LLOSA **The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta** *Faber* £9.95
FAY WELDON **The Rules of Life** *Hutchinson* £6.95
JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN **A Glance Away** *Allison & Busby* £9.95
MONIQUE WITTIG **Across the Acheron** *Peter Owen* £8.95
MARGUERITE YOURCENAR **Two Lives and a Dream** *Aidan Ellis* £10.95

## Genre fiction

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RUTH RENDELL **Heartstones** *Hutchinson* £6.95
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GILLIAN SLOVO **Death By Analysis** *Women's Press* £7.95 & £3.95
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## Arts

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## POETRY

# Ordinary people

John Lucas

**With the Offal Eaters**
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DAVID SUTTON *Peterloo Poets* £3
**A Life**
IAIN CRICHTON SMITH *Carcanet* £4.95

YOU'D HAVE TO BE very dull of soul to pass by **With the Offal Eaters**. Douglas Houston's first collection is quite the most entertaining volume of poems I've read this year and probably the most original. Houston has a relish for converting the ordinariness of provincial life and mores into something new and strange. Or perhaps it's more accurate to say that what might seem to others ordinary is to him fresh minted, stamped into unique mould by a language that is by turns ingeniously comic or pincer sharp. It isn't just any poet who could compose a poem to his clapped-out van and apostrophise it as 'our four-wheeled bedroom-wine-bar-kitchen-sink') or remark that 'On Mondays all the butchers' blinds are down/Commemorating Sundays' pause in slaughter.'

There are occasions when Houston's democratic vistas become clouded by a populist fuzz. His elegising John Lennon as a man who 'was singing of the one relief/That life affords from death and he meant love' seems to me either to grant too much to Lenon or too little to love (or life, for that matter). There are other occasions when he is plain clumsy. Robert Graves would have put the blue pencil through 'My behaviour lacked that regulation/That comes . . . ' And sometimes the delight in comic possibilities takes away from psychological reality. No paranoid would speak as the narrator of 'From the Corner' is made to; even if you say that this is because the tone is meant to be Beckettian in its mixture of jauntiness and horror, that merely compounds what's wrong with the poem. It's too literary, has been done before.

What hasn't been done before comes out in those poems where Houston acknowledges the presence of pain and, without at all scanting it, nevertheless writes a poetry of acceptance whose humanism is anti-stoic. I'm thinking of such poems as 'The Clasp' and 'On the Beach', which can't be quoted from without spoiling them but which are just two of the reasons why you ought to go out and buy his book.

Tony Connor's new volume, **Spirits of the Place**, is also much concerned with scenes from provincial life, but I can't find much that is spirited about them. His earlier poetry did, I think, have a real ability to record without merely tabulating a grimy, semi-detached view of people and things. At its best it was properly redemptive. But now it's as though he has lost the vital dimension that would link him to his losses and so provide a justification for writing about them. Many of the poems are about his Americanised self looking back in some puzzlement to his English past, still with a half desire to connect to it but fearing that the severance has proved final. 'I stood there with my lesson — /whatever the lesson was' one poem ends and, although the glum conclusion is presumably meant as an irony — there really *is* a lesson you see — glumness is what the volume mostly records. At all events, Connor lacks that saving way with words and rhythms which Houston has in abundance.

Philip Holmes does rather better in **The Green Road**, whose long title sequence is about the Swaledale lead mines in North Yorkshire. It's surely entirely proper, indeed honourable, for a poet to act as historian, to give currency to 'things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed', in Wordsworth's formulation. Holmes ends his sequence by invoking 'part of the world that's gone/this green road led to once' and whatever's best about his poem depends on his careful reconstruction of a place and its history (which includes the use of letters written by those who had to live through its good and bad days and who, in one case at least, found emigration to America the only hope). I would like to be able to say that the best is good enough to merit three cheers, but I think one will have to do. Holmes sees the people he writes about through a film of language that goes with a particular kind of attitudinising, towards the miners, towards the provincial, towards the past. Thus the miners are described as 'awkward in their Sunday clothes'. It's how Pip saw Joe Gargery. But it isn't how Dickens saw him.

It might not be how David Sutton would see him, either. There are several poems about other people in **Flints** and Sutton anxiously seeks to rescue them from cliché. Too anxiously, I think, with the result that he ends up being inertly 'compassionate' towards them. The old man who haunts libraries and who sees the look of bored dismissal that passes between girl librarians 'understands./He turns and shuffles out into the night.' There are 'Yobs' who mend the poet's motor scooter. These pleas for human individuality can't survive the soft smother of sentiment under which they're buried. Sutton is much better — excellent, in fact — when he focusses on the quiddity rather than the quotidian: on 'dancing runes of river-light on slate' or the 'Outskirts' he defines in a poem whose intimations of mortality recur elsewhere in the volume, but not so greyly as to damage this enjoyable collection.

**A Life** is also an enjoyable read, although Crichton Smith occasionally dishes up the kind of rhyme that makes you want to send him to the bottom of the class. In fact, anyone who without justification rhymes 'see' with 'the' ought probably to be put out of the room. (By contrast, Houston has some quite brilliant — and natural-feeling — rhymes and Sutton's are

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characteristically reliable). What saves this so-called autobiographical poem is what is least autobiographical about it: alert writing about other people, especially those who occur in the section on 'National Service' and most especially the plumber's mate, eyes 'wells of weeping', who commits suicide and whose short history Crichton Smith writes about so attentively that you forgive him other moments when his store of adjectives slide oh so smoothly into their predestined places. □

# A world war

Barbara Rogers

**South Africa: Background to the Crisis**
MICHAEL ATTWELL *Sidgwick* £14.95 & £9.95
**Destructive Engagement**
JULIUS K. NYERERE *Zimbabwe Publishing House for the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre* dist. *Leishman & Taussig* £7.50
**Brutal Force: The Apartheid War Machine**
GAVIN CAWTHRA *International Defence and Aid* £6
**Apartheid in Crisis**
ed. MARK A. UHLIG *Penguin* £3.95

IT'S CHEATING, really, to compare one crisis with another, but comparing the hidden wars in southern Africa with the mayhem in Beirut, as Desmond Tutu does in *Apartheid in Crisis*, may be a way to bring home to us just how hideous and how threatening it all is: to Africa and, in the end, to us all.

Deepening crisis in South Africa is perfect for the publishers. A rush of 'deep background' books appears — of which a classic is Michael Attwell's **Background to the Crisis** — the strange thing being that most of them are written by people who have not published anything on the situation before it became headline news. So we need a selective approach to what's on offer if we're to find something more than interviews with individuals, without any kind of context: if we're to find some sort of analysis that either explains what is going on or, better still, provides us with a basis for useful action.

It is crucial, also, that we be reminded of the regional dimension of the crisis. The 'instant background' book such as Attwell's ignores this completely in its fascination with attitudes and personalities on the South African scene. Tanzania's President Nyerere has to deliver the message, in a book *not* widely distributed in this country, **Destructive Engagement:**

> South Africa, at war with its own people, is waging an undeclared war against its neighbours — the independent black-ruled states which have the geographical misfortune to share its borders . . . The regional objective is to create and maintain a dependence that will be economically lucrative and politically submissive — and act as a bulwark against the imposition of international sanctions against apartheid.

The issues are no longer, if they ever were, about political attitudes. They have to do with military force and economic muscle. There is a war on: a civil war and a regional war.

Another 'fringe' publication, **Brutal Force: The Apartheid War Machine**, gets to the heart of the matter. Cawthra outlines the militarisation of the apartheid system in order to suppress resistance and explains how, as repression becomes more violent, it helps to fuel the resistance itself. Tens of thousands of people have been killed by South African forces and the front organisations they promote, in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia as well as in South Africa itself.

The parallel that comes to mind when reading this and other accounts is with Nazism: both an evil force within its own country and a menace to neighbours and, ultimately, the world. South African government officials hate this comparison more than any other, largely because it is — quite literally — true; as painstaking work by the Cameroonian Alexandre Kum'a Ndumbe in both East and West German archives has shown. Nazi ideology, especially its (largely unrealised) plans for a forced labour system in Africa, derived from and contributed to the idea of a system of apartheid in South Africa. If any British publisher really wants to make an original contribution to our understanding about South Africa it could make Ndumbe's work available in English.

Meanwhile, where do we go for the best explanation of what is going on in controlled-labour camps known as townships and bantustans? Two of the contributions in the Penguin book, **Apartheid in Crisis**, are among the best I have seen. There is one from Desmond Tutu eloquent as ever. But he is surpassed by the novelist and editor, Mothobi Mutloatse, whose 'Letter from Soweto' ought to be on the desk of every foreign policy official in the western world. The people, he explains, have been robbed of their land and even their culture, the basis of their humanity. Terrorised by a permanent army of occupation inside the townships, people have lost their fear of the guns and tanks and many are ready to die: all have been forced to become guerrillas:

> For all of us, guerrillas and privileged alike, there is no escape. All we can humanly do is try to minimize the pain. There is no escape from the hell that apartheid built. □

*Barbara Rogers edits* Everywoman. *She is co-author of, among other titles,* Sanctions Against South Africa: Exploding the Myth *(Manchester Free Press, 1981).*

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# LETTERS

## Origins of homophobia

*Dermod Quirke, Newark, Notts.*

Your gay glossarists (*NS* 12 Sept.) don't seem to have searched very hard for the origins of 'homophobia': it was launched by George Weinberg in his *Society and the healthy homosexual* (1973). To mock US psychiatrists, who oppressed gays by attributing phoney mental diseases to them, Weinberg invented the equally phoney concept of homophobia. Unfortunately, credulous readers took him seriously, and the joke became widely accepted as scientific fact. It is nothing of the kind: people who hate and fear gays are not sick — they are ignorant bigots.

Incidentally, 'gay' in its modern sense was first recorded in 1935, but may well be considerably older. 'Gay' has been a euphemism for dissipated or immoral since at least the early nineteenth century, and the Victorians used it to describe female prostitutes. Hence it largely fell out of use in its primary sense of light-hearted and merry.

*Bob Cant, London N4*

Violence against young lesbians and gays is, as your article on sex education says, one of the most terrible of the forms of oppression they experience. One of the benefits of a policy of positive images of lesbians and gays in schools would be that it would enable teaching and pastoral staff to give support to the victims of violence and to challenge the perpetrators. Without any such policy teachers who take such action are risking exposing themselves to innuendo, harassment and disciplinary action. It has been the case in Haringey that the Tories and the other advocates of ignorance have consistently refused to discuss this question of violence.

Education alone cannot, of course, change the world but positive images of lesbians and gays would go a long way towards making such violence less frequent and creating a climate where mutual respect between different cultures became what we understand by normality.

*Tom Lintott, Brighton*

The article about sex education totally fails to come to grips with the genuine concerns of many parents and others about all manner of aspects about a highly sensitive subject. What about answers to the following points?
1) Heterosexism is justified by childbirth;
2) Christian teaching on sexual matters is unambiguous (Britain is still, at least nominally, a Christian country);
3) The teaching of other religions widespread in Britain is, if anything, less ambiguous;
4) The more taboo a subject is, the more pressure there is to conform in public life.
Perhaps it would be best if the writers talked to or even argued with their opponents in Haringey, instead of dismissing them out of hand.

## Spare us the propaganda

*Edward Atkin, London NW3*

Even assuming job creation programmes actually created jobs (which of course they never have), depriving everyone who is worth more than £1,000,000 of their assets above this figure would hardly be a sensible or feasible way of financing them.

These assets are not bank notes under the mattress waiting to be spent but houses, factories, farms, equities, investments and art. Taking these into government ownership does not create wealth, quite the reverse. If they were all to be sold their value would plummet and anyway who would be the buyers?

Under your new Editorship your journal is promising to make real progress, surely you can spare us the crude propaganda.

## Second-hand views

*Jim Naughtie, the* Guardian

Miscellany (*NS* 19 Sept.) attributes to me views about reform of the lobby which aren't mine. I'm not 'uncertain' about what needs to be done, and nor is the *Guardian*. If I'd been asked for my views I would have given them, happily and accurately. I'd also have suggested re-reading the paper on the morning after the reshuffle before suggesting that we succumbed to a Downing Street steer and gave 'pride of coverage' to Edwina Currie over the more interesting Rumbold-Patten fandango. We didn't.

## Can Labour win?

*Ernest Wood, Okehampton, Devon*

You say (*NS* 12 Sept.) that the Labour Co-ordinating Committee have 'fired a broadside' at the Labour leadership, calling upon them to cease 'projecting an image of moderation' and that Peter Hain's question 'why should people vote for us if we do not distinguish ourselves from them (the Alliance)' deserves an answer.

I think they can easily answer the question themselves. Can any member of the LCC put their hand on their heart and say, without equivocation, that they honestly believe a policy of radical *socialist* reform is going to bring us the votes we need from the electorate that occupy the middle ground, in order to win the next election?

These electors who, by and large, are doing very well themselves, may be willing to vote for a government that will revive the economy and ameliorate the situation of those who, like their children and parents, are suffering because of Thatcher's mal-administration, but full-blooded socialism? I think not. If they vote for us rather than the Alliance it will be because we are more convincing, our front bench has greater stature, we are reaching agreements with the unions which may achieve expansion without increased inflation *on our terms*, and because we are not, unlike in 1983, promising more than they think can reasonably be expected.

If the members of the LCC say yes to my question, they are either lying or they have profoundly misunderstood the British electorate. If they say no, it means they place greater value upon their socialist 'purity' than on Labour's duty to win the next election so that we can initiate a genuine change of direction.

*Dave Cook, National Campaign Organiser, Communist Party*

There is nothing wrong with the idea of a short-term recovery programme. Tackling Britain's crisis and the damage done by Thatcherism, which are not the same thing, won't be accomplished in one parliamentary term. It would be unreal to frame policies without an eye to political realities. However, allowing for these considerations there is a real credibility gap about whether the extremely modest package on offer can achieve even its limited objectives.

Genuinely popular issues like devolution and the demand for a moratorium on nuclear power are dodged. Policies aimed at democratisation and the re-distribution of wealth are few and far between. At the TUC there was a strong atmosphere that anything to do with campaigning was an electoral liability. Yet without mass campaigning the road to a Labour parliamentary majority will be dangerously uncertain. The left either relies on the repeatedly disproven theory that people dissatisfied with the Tories will *automatically* switch to Labour, or it gets out there and through mass ctivity creates the conditions in which rejection of Thatcher is translated into political support for an alternative.

Far from 'frightening off the middle ground', the big worry is whether this recovery programme has the guts to win it.

## Not a Tame response

*Chris Tame, British Association of Libertarian Feminists*

Sarah Benton's obsession ('But why do they call themselves feminists?' *NS* 19 Sept.) with people's dress and personal style is indicative of contemporary socialism's abandonment of serious thinking in favour of designer ideology and 'Comrade Blimp' cultural bigotry.

Contrary to Ms Benton's assertion, none of us at the Libertarian Feminists Conference denied the impact of other forms of social constraint and pressure in restricting self-actualisation (for men or women). She seems to have misunderstood our comments about 'negative' and 'positive' liberty.

The 'entire audience' was not 'awed' by Steve Davies's account of the libertarian feminist tradition. Her allegation that 'before Sunday Libertarians did not claim an ancestry from 19th century campaigners' is absurd. The rich heritage of classical liberal, libertarian and individualist anarchist thought and activism has been the subject of many of our writings and meetings.

Ms Benton might find the disruption of our meeting and my alleged 'prowling' amusing, but since the Libertarian Alliance and the Alternative



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Bookshop has been subjected to repeated fire bombings and physical attacks of just the sort threatened by the hysterical thugs from *Anarchist(sic) Feminist* we tend to take such threats seriously.

Ms Benton also misrepresents Ayn Rand's work. It has a lot to say about women and has inspired countless women to resist the social irrationalism which restricts their interests. For, contrary to Sarah Benton, it is not 'male culture' (what an incredibly sexist notion) which oppresses women, but the irrationalist, collectivist and authoritarian cultural and political forces from which *all* individuals suffer.

## Rusty facts

*Joanna Tait, Chair, Socialist Educational Association*

While I cannot comment on the accuracy of Ian Williams's report (*NS* 19 Sept.) on the SHA and SLL, the muddle he has created out of the history of the SEA needs correcting, particularly as SEA will be celebrating its 60th bithday in January 1987.

1. NALT, established in 1927, was the predecessor of SEA. In 1960 NALT changed its name to form the Socialist Educational Association. Graham Lane is the current General Secretary of SEA.
2. I have been asked to reassure *NS* readers that SEA members teaching in polytechnics, adult education institutes and universities, are not only teachers, but are strongly committed to SEA's policy for comprehensive education in both schools and post-compulsory education.
3. While SEA would agree with Ian Williams that the establishment of comprehensive education *in schools* is one of its greatest achievements, SEA is also the first to say that this represents only part of our ultimate goal: a totally comprehensive service covering all aspects of education.

SEA's resolution to Party Conference on a 1988 Education Act, which proposes comprehensive education at all levels in the system, will be strongly supported. This will provide a clear policy for Labour's entire education programme and ensure that the next Labour government enters office ready to put its policies into practice. It will also mean that the next major step required for a truly comprehensive education system has been achieved.

## Spend, spend, spend?

*Martin Quinlan, Rabley Heath, Herts.*

Is the London Borough of Brent pulling our legs? The advertisement in your 12 September issue tells us that Brent faces problems of 'multiple deprivation', yet the Borough is seeking to employ eleven new personal assistants for committee 'chairs' at a total cost (including overheads) of approaching £250,000 annually. Truly, there is nothing easier than spending other peoples' money.


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**UNATTACHED, PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC WOMAN,** mid-late 30s? Interested in music, theatre, sport, politics? Concerned about biological clock ticking away, and wondering about possibility of late family? Why not contact male (40s) equivalent? London area. Photo appreciated, not essential. Box (39)3795. N39.23

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# MEETINGS

**THEOSOPHY:** Informal Discussion 'Conversations on Occultism'. Sundays 8-9 p.m. during July and September. All welcome. S.a.e. for programme, free pamphlets & book list. United Lodge of Theosophists, 62 Queen's Gardens, W2 3AL. N28.4

# BILLBOARD

## Theatre

**BLOOMSBURY THEATRE** 01-387 9629. Until 27 Sept. 8 p.m. **HULL TRUCK THEATRE COMPANY** in **CRAMP.** 7-10 Oct. and 15 Oct. (Mats.) THE GOOD COMPANY in **I, BERTOLT BRECHT.**

**NATIONAL THEATRE** 01-928 2252 Olivier (open stage) **THE THREEPENNY OPERA, ANIMAL FARM.** Lyttelton (proscenium stage) **THE MAGISTRATE, BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS.** Cottesloe (small auditorium) **THE BAY AT NICE/WRECKED EGGS.** See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

# AGENDA

### SUN 28 SEPT

**EUROPEAN ENERGY POLICY POST CHERNOBYL** 2pm, New Clifton Hotel, Talbot Sq., Promenade, Blackpool. Speakers: Dr Gordon Adam MEP (Vice-Chair of Energy, Research and Technology, EP), SDP Spokesperson on Energy Policy. Chair: Hugh McMahon MEP. Org. Links Europa.

**MAPAM SOCIALIST ZIONIST GROUP.** Rabbi David Goldberg on 'Pluralism in Anglo-Jewry — Fact or Fiction?' Hashomer House, 37a Broadhurst Gdns, London NW6 at 8pm.

**JEWISH SOCIALISTS' GROUP,** reportback on Israel-Palestine visit, what we saw, who we met. 7.45 for 8pm. Friends International Centre, Byng Place, Torrington Place, WC1.

### MON 29 SEPT

**CIVIL LIBERTIES: PROGRAMME FOR THE NEXT GOVERNMENT.** National Council for Civil Liberties fringe meeting in the Albert Hotel, 117 Albert Road at 5.45pm. Chair: Alf *Dubs MP. Speakers:* Rt Hon Gerald Kaufman MP, Christopher Price, Marie Staunton (NCCL).

**BENEATH THE WHITE COAT:** a seminar series on Science and Politics in the 1980s organised by the **British Society for Social Responsibility in Science.** Monday evenings fortnightly at 6.30pm. This week: **Joe Schwartz** 'The Nuclear Industry Fights Back — What Do We Do?' Details: 01-607 9615.

### THURS 9 OCT

**NUCLEAR WASTE.** The answer to NIREX. Speakers: Nick Butler, Chris Smith MP. Grafton House, Newland, Lincoln, 7.30pm. Org by Lincoln Labour Party (0522) 28041.

### SAT 11 OCT

**ROSA LUXEMBURG & KARL LIEBKNECHT:** Revolution, Remembrance, Representation. Seminar 12 noon with May Stevens, John A. Walker and others, at the Pentonville Gallery, 4 Whitfield Street, London W1. Exhibition continues through 22 Nov. Free admission. Enqs 01-482 2948.

**SOCIAL ASPECTS OF AIDS.** A conference for all interested in social dimensions of HIV infections and AIDS. Speakers: Keith Alcorn, Tony Coxon, Julian Meldrum, Ken Plummer, Hugh Robertson, Simon Watney, Kaye Wellings, Tony Whitehead, Tony Vass. Venue: Bristol Polytechnic 10am-6pm. Details: 0272 741251 (Peter Aggleton or Hilary Homans).

### THURS 16 OCT

**PETER NEWSAM** on **'PERCEPTION OF MINORITIES AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA'** — the Minority Rights Group's Annual Lecture. 6pm at the Royal Society of Arts, 8 John Adam Street, London WC2. All welcome, admission free without tickets.

### PUBLICATIONS

**SPARTACIST 36-37:** 'Healyism Implodes' p&p £1. Spartacist 38-39: 'The SWP — A Strangled Party,' p&p £1. Spartacist pamphlet 'The Socialist Workers Party: An Obituary', p&p 50p. Complete package £2.50 from: SI Box 185, London WC1H 8JE.

# CHANGES TO *NEW STATESMAN* CLASSIFIEDS

As you will have read elsewhere in the paper the *New Statesman* is undergoing a metamorphosis and this has repercussions for the classified pages.

Starting from next week the column widths will be as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 column | 47mm |
| 2 columns | 99mm |
| 3 columns | 149mm |
| 4 columns | 202mm |

Our new printing schedule means that we have had to bring our copy deadline forward by one day. **All copy must now be received by 12 noon on the Monday of the week of publication.**



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AGENDA

**FOR DETAILS CALL DAVID JONES 01-251 5487**

**PUBLIC ENTERPRISE GROUP FRINGE MEETING**

Speaker: **Tony Benn MP**
Themes: **'Central Economic Planning; Future of Socialised Industries'.**

**Tuesday 30 September 1986**
**5.30 p.m.**
**Strand Restaurant, 132 Promenade, Blackpool.**

**DEMOCRACY 2000 ASSOCIATION**

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**Labour Party Conference**
**"THE WAY FORWARD"**
FRINGE MEETING ON SOCIAL SECURITY
(Jointly sponsored by Action for Benefits and National Campaign Against Social Security Cuts)
**Monday, 29 September 1986**
12.30-2pm
Windsor Bar, Winter Gardens, Blackpool
*Speakers:* Tess Gill (Chair), Bernie Grant, Harriet Harman, Tessa Jowell, Michael Meacher an NCASSC Speaker

# THE SOCIALIST SOCIETY

## BOOK OF THE MONTH SEMINARS at the Old Coffee House, Beak Street, London W1, all at 8p.m.

**FRI. 3 OCT.**
Leo Panitch, author of *Working Class Politics in Crisis* (Verso), on 'Socialism after Blackpool'.

**TUES. 21 OCT.**
Peter Dews, author of *Autonomy and Solidarity* (Verso) on 'Habermas and the Marxist Tradition'.

**TUES. 18 NOV.**
Michelle Barratt, Anne Phillips and Lorna Weir (Toronto), authors of *The Politics of Diversity*, on 'Feminism, Marxism, Nationalism'.

**TUES. 2 DEC.**
Cora Caplan, author of *Sea Changes* (Verso) on 'Cultural Politics and Feminism'.

Coming in February, Jacqueline Rose on 'Psychoanalysis & the Left'.

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# LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE 1986

## FRINGE MEETINGS

### Enterprise Boards and Economic Policy — The Way Ahead.

Wednesday 1 October, 5.30-8pm.
Louis Room, Imperial Hotel, Blackpool.

Speakers: John Prescott MP, Geoff Edge, John Duncan, Louise Ellman, John Gunnell, Tony Millwood.

### Labour and the Motor Industry

Thursday 2 October, 6-8pm.
Prince Henry Room, New Clifton Hotel.

Speakers: John Smith MP, Geoff Edge, Eddie Haigh, Barbara Switzer (with the Campaign for the British Motor Industry).

**For tickets and information for both meetings ring 021-236 2704.**

***West Midlands Enterprise Board Ltd***

# FABIAN society

**FRINGE MEETINGS:**
***Labour Party Conference Blackpool***
**Sun, 28 Sept, 10pm**
New Clifton Hotel
**Labour and the Unions**
Brenda Dean, Bill McCarthy, Gordon Brown MP
Chair: Andrew McIntosh
**Mon, 29 Sept, 10pm**
Imperial Hotel
**French Lessons for Labour**
Fraternal Delegate from French Socialist Party & David Bell
Chair: Carole Tongue MEP
**Tues, 30 Sept, 9pm**
Young Fabians
Scarlett's Disco
Tara Hotel
**Manufacturing, Job Creation and the Return of a Labour Government**
Bill Jordan (President AEU)
Chair: Alan Williams MP
**Tues, 30 Sept, 10pm**
New Clifton Hotel
**Labour and the Youth Vote**
John Mann, Paul Bower, Susan Deacon
Chair: Tom Sawyer

**FABIAN SOCIETY**
**11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN**

**THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN TURKEY**
Video and meeting
*Speakers:* **E. Roberts MP**
**R. Balfe MEP, J. Corbyn MP, C. Tongue MEP, A. Bucak**
(Islington Labour Party, Turkish Section)
**Wednesday, 1 October, 5.30pm**
**Victoria Bar, Winter Gardens, Blackpool**
*Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey*

**BELGRANO INQUIRY:**
is the sinking of the Belgrano linked to Libya and Nicaragua?

**A 2-Day Debate**

with *Diana Gould, Tam Dalyell, Clive Ponting* and other experts on *Fri./Sat. Nov. 7-8* at **Hampstead Town Hall,** (top of **Haverstock Hill, Belsize Park** tube) at £2 per day, £1 unwaged, 9.30-5.

Tickets and information from **Belgrano Action Group, 6 Sanway Road, Byfleet, Surrey KT14 7SF.**

Supported by **Camden Borough Council** as part of *International Year of Peace.*

AGENDA costs only £5 for 25 words (extra words 30p each) inclusive of VAT. Agenda Display Ads are £5 per single column centimetre (+VAT). Minimum size is 3cms.

Advertisers please note that the deadline for bookings is 4pm on Mondays (for the rest of Classifieds the deadline is 12 noon on Mondays)



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FOOD

# Sicilian saucery

Anna Del Conte

SICILY, A MYSTERIOUS and fascinating island, has had a chequered history. From the time that it was colonised by the Greeks, it had to live under the rule of many occupying powers. Yet, from each of these — and mainly from the Greeks, Saracens and Normans — the Sicilians acquired new learning and skills, often adapting and improving them, whether in architecture, philosophy or cooking.

They learnt the ways of Greek cooking so well that the rich Athenians used to employ Sicilian cooks. In fact the foundations of Sicilian cooking, which in its turn has greatly influenced all Italian cooking, are Greek. It is based on simple local food: fish, with innumerable fish soups, and vegetables.

Over a millenium later, another great civilisation overtook the island. This was the period of Arab domination, during which many new foods and new methods of cooking were introduced. The Saracens brought aubergines, spinach, bitter oranges, almonds, rice, apricots, sugar and spices. They taught the Sicilians how to preserve fish and meat, how to dry fruits and how to make the delicious sweets for which Sicily is still famous. It is also from the Saracens that the Sicilians learnt the basic techniques of making sorbet. Last, but not least, the Arabs introduced to Sicily the art of distillation, the very word alcohol being a corruption of the Arabic *al-kohl*.

Next came the Normans, who brought to Sicily their own recipes from the North and their northern methods of cooking. It was in the 13th century, during the Norman domination, that the first reference to spaghetti appears. King Roger II commissioned an Arab geographer, Al-Idrisi, to explore Sicily and, in his writings, there is a reference to people making flour and water into strings which they called *itryah*, the Arab word for string. In Sicily and southern Italy, spaghetti is still called *trii* in some recipes.

Still to this day the Sicilians' favourite food is pasta. They have any number of excellent recipes, particularly for pasta with vegetables, of which the aubergine is the most common. One of the more popular of these is *Pasta alla Norma* — pasta with aubergine, tomato and hard *ricotta* — so called because it is good enough to stand comparison with Vincenzo Bellini's masterpiece, which in Catania (birthplace of both Bellini and this dish) is synonymous with perfection.

A characteristic of Sicilian cooking is that most dishes are based on simple ingredients, which are then embellished and enriched to make the end result a fantastic and almost baroque achievement. This aspect is most evident in the sweets and puddings, a good example being the well known *cassata siciliana*, the recipe for which is given below.

## Caponata

*Aubergines in a sweet and sour sauce*

This is one of the glories of Sicilian cooking. Many different versions of it are to be found throughout the island, in some of which sultanas and pine nuts, or even bitter chocolate, are added. The garnish can be tiny boiled octopus, prawns or seafood instead of the hard-boiled eggs. Although it takes a little time to prepare and cook, the final result is worth every minute spent in the kitchen. This is my version which I always make a day in advance. *Caponata* can be kept in the fridge for up to three days, or can be frozen. The amounts below will serve four people.

*750g (1½lb) aubergines, cut into 1cm (½ inch) cubes*
*Salt and freshly ground black pepper*
*Vegetable oil for frying*
*The inner sticks of 1 celery head, coarse threads removed and cut into similar cubes*
*60ml (4 tbsp) olive oil*
*1 onion, very finely sliced*
*227g (8oz) of tinned plum tomatoes*
*15ml (1 tbsp) granulated sugar*
*100ml (4 fl oz) red wine vinegar*
*50g (2oz) capers*
*50g (2oz) large green olives, stoned and quartered*
*2 hard-boiled eggs (optional)*

Sprinkle the aubergine cubes with salt and place them in a colander to drain, with a weight on top. Leave them to stand for at least 1 hour, then squeeze them and dry them well on kitchen paper.

Heat 2½cm (1 inch) of vegetable oil in a frying pan. When the oil is hot (it is ready when it sizzles around a cube of aubergine) add a layer of aubergines and fry until golden brown on all sides. Drain on kitchen paper. Repeat until all the aubergines are cooked.

Wash and dry the celery and fry it in the same oil as the aubergines, until golden and crisp. Drain it on kitchen paper.

Pour the olive oil into a clean frying pan and add the onion. Sauté gently for about 10 minutes until soft. Put the tomatoes through the fine holes of a food-mill and add to the onion with salt and pepper and cook, stirring frequently, over moderate heat for 15 minutes.

While the sauce is cooking, heat the sugar and the vinegar in a small saucepan. Add the capers and the olives and simmer gently for 10 minutes or so. Add to the tomato sauce and then mix in the aubergines and the celery. Stir and leave for a few minutes so that the flavours of the ingredients can blend together. Pour the *Caponata* into a serving dish and allow to cool. Before serving, if you wish, cover the *Caponata* with the hard-boiled eggs passed through the smallest holes of the food-mill. Serve at room temperature, with plenty of good quality crusty bread.

## Pasta con le Sarde

*Pasta with fresh sardines*

This dish is like a history of Sicily writ small: part Greek, part Saracen, part Norman. The sardines and the wild fennel, typical food of the ancient Greeks, are here used to dress the most Italian of all foods, pasta. The dressing is lightened and made more interesting by the inclusion of pine nuts and sultanas, a Saracen influence, and the finished dish is cooked in the oven, a method brought to the island by the Normans. If you cannot get hold of wild or cultivated fennel leaves, use a small fennel bulb, cut into strips, together with its feathery green top. Amounts below will serve four people.

*50g (2oz) sultanas*
*75ml (5 fl oz) olive oil*
*Salt*
*1 onion, very finely sliced*
*50g (2oz) pine nuts*
*200g (7oz) wild or cultivated fennel leaves*
*3 anchovy fillets, chopped*
*450g (1lb) fresh sardines, filleted*
*5ml (1 tsp) fennel seed*
*Freshly ground black pepper*
*350g (12oz)* penne *or* rigatoni

Soak the sultanas in warm water for 10 minutes. Drain and dry well with kitchen paper.

Put 3 tablespoons of the oil in a frying pan, add the onion and salt and sauté gently for 10 minutes, stirring frequently until soft. Mix in the dried sultanas and the pine nuts and continue to cook for a further 2 minutes. Meanwhile blanch the fennel leaves in a large saucepan of salted boiling water for 1 minute (if you are using fennel bulb, cook until soft). Lift the fennel out of the water with a slotted spoon, drain and dry with kitchen paper. Reserve the water in which it has cooked. Chop the fennel and add to the onion mixture together with the anchovy fillets. Cook slowly for 10 to 15 minutes, adding a couple of tablespoons of the fennel water whenever the mixture appears too dry.

Chop about half of the sardines and add to the pan with the fennel seeds and a generous grinding of pepper. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently and adding more water when necessary. Taste and adjust seasoning. Heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas 6. While the sauce is cooking, cook the pasta in the fennel water until very *al dente*. Drain, return the pasta to the pan and dress immediately with the sardine sauce.

Grease a deep oven-proof dish with a little oil and transfer the pasta into it. Lay the remaining sardines over the pasta, dribble with the rest of the oil and cover with aluminium foil. Bake in the preheated oven for 15 minutes.

The dish can be prepared a few hours in advance and then baked for an extra 10 minutes to heat the pasta through. But, as sardines do not keep, it must be eaten on the same day.

## Cassata Sicilana

*Sicilian gâteau*

This was the cake made for Easter Sunday by the nuns in the island's convents. Some of the nuns, however, dedicated themselves so enthusiastically to the preparation of this worldly concoction that they began to neglect their religious duties during Holy Week. As a result, the religious authorities in the 16th century brought the practice to an end.

When you buy *ricotta*, ask to taste it first, since it is highly perishable. It should be rich and just slightly tart, but without the metallic after-taste that *ricotta*



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gets when it is not as fresh as it should be.

You can simplify the Cassata by omitting the icing; instead, sprinkle it all over lavishly with icing sugar. Amounts below are for eight people.

*450g (1lb)* ricotta *cheese*
*175g (6oz) caster sugar*
*150ml (¼ pint) double cream*
*225g (8oz) crystallised fruit*
*Pinch of ground cinnamon*
*75g (3oz) bitter chocolate, chopped into small pieces*
*25g (1oz) pistachio nuts, blanched, skinned and chopped*
*100ml (4 floz) Maraschino or Kirsch*
*450g (1lb) Madeira cake, cut into slices 1cm (½ inch) thick*
For the icing (optional):
*550g (1lb 4oz) icing sugar, sifted*
*105ml (7 tbsp) water*
*15ml (1 tbsp) lemon juice*

Using the back of a wooden spoon, press the *ricotta* through a sieve into a bowl. Stir in the sugar and the cream.

Cut half of the crystallised fruit into small pieces, reserving the best fruit for decoration. Add to the *ricotta* mixture with the cinnamon, chocolate, pistachios and half the liqueur. Cover with cling film and chill for at least 3 hours.

Turn the cake out onto a round serving dish, and remove the paper.

Place the icing sugar, water and lemon juice in a heavy saucepan. Heat gently, stirring, until the mixture is warm but not boiling. It should be thick enough to coat the back of a spoon evenly. Pour the icing over the cake and let it run down the sides. Smooth it over the top with a palette knife. Put the cake back into the refrigerator to allow the icing to set.

Decorate with the reserved crystallised fruit. Serve chilled. □

# Where the heart is

## Kate Pullinger

ON RETURNING from a recent holiday in Canada, my native land, I experienced a slight dose of culture shock. From the land of moose, 'Grizzly Beer' and post-Trudeau tristesse, back to the land of hedgehogs, 'Hurry-up-please-it's-time' and post-war decline, it took me a while to settle down. This unease, however, was slight compared to the culture shock I am now experiencing, having been abruptly evicted from my happy home in Vauxhall and, through some cruel twist of fate, ending up in Bloomsbury.

After a year of pleasant dinner parties and evening salons in a doomed Lambeth Council property, my flatmate and I were unceremoniously evicted by an enormous platoon of carpenters, housing officers, police officers, bailiffs and other assorted thugs, all of whom were completely unnecessary as we, the horribly agreeable squatters, had already moved out. But there is nothing that Lambeth Council likes quite as much as a fight: the bailiffs descended, smashing up our flat while we gathered our last few bits and pieces. We ducked out under the picture of a naked woman with which they had festively decorated the stairwell, proving yet again that Labour, Lambeth especially, really cares. Linda Bellos, you should have been there.

Faced with the truly spine-chilling spectre of homelessness, we busied ourselves trying to find somewhere to live. We wandered the streets crying 'Show me the way to go home' and gawping, our mouth watering, into other people's sitting rooms.

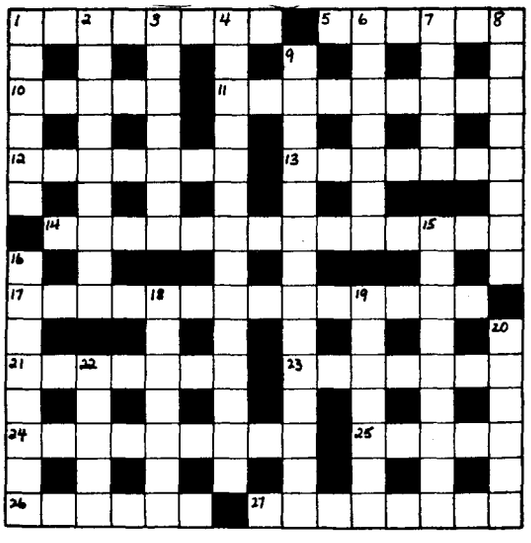
Then we found it, the Perfect House. We moved in and made splendid plans for bigger and better dinner parties and evening salons, this time with the weight of history behind us: this Perfect House is in Bloomsbury and what else is Bloomsbury if not Home of the Salon?

Alas, alack, just when everything looked as smooth as a dry martini, we have been struck down mid-cocktail party by yet another terrible spectre, that of homesickness. Having lived in Vauxhall for well over four years I had grown to know and love an area of London that most people think consists of one enormous intersection, Vauxhall Cross. And now, firmly ensconced in the luxury of Bloomsbury, I miss it.

Vauxhall is a wonderful place to go to other places from. It is a short bicycle ride to Brixton, the market, the recreation centre and an equally short bicycle ride to the West End. Besides, South London is a long way from North London, a big plus, and I used to be able to hear Big Ben from our toilet late at night. Vauxhall is very near the Battersea Power Station, a post-modern icon if there ever was one. Shops and launderettes are cheap and squatters are often the rule, not the exception. What Vauxhall lacks in amenities, it makes up for with other lacks: for example, there are no

# Weekend Crossword 1533

**PRIZE: £10 Book Token for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Crossword 1533, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by first post 14 October.**



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

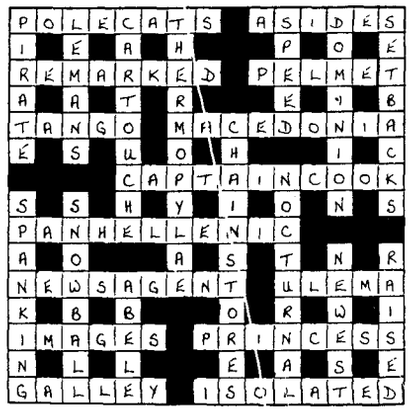
1. See plane crash from the Himalayas (8)
5. Mission from which the messenger ran downhill when returning (6)
10. Where delicious food is sent back (5)
11. They are sweet to help one across (9)
12. Pacific country goes to the devil, we hear (7)
13. The currency is changed once without a tax return (7)
14. Provide cases and time for a novel (7,3,4)
17. Characters appearing in 14 have garden seat with Urdu translation (14)
21. So-called mixture of man and lion (7)
23. A fellow is about to put restrictions on freedom (7)
24. Steal a sign looking like gold (9)
25. Bury going the whole season without a point (5)
26. A bird in hospital hurts badly (6)
27. Animals with hats made of textile fabric (8)

DOWN

1. The northerner when dining out is better dressed (6)
2. Make the enclosure conclude without a day for the correspondent (9)
3. Being on the threshold could make one man ill (7)
4. Walked around a little creature against being disciplined (14)
6. There is extraordinary greed in what the king did (7)
7. It is a perfume which starts an affair (5)
8. Does slip all over the place and strips (8)
9. Gear needed for what batsmen and footballers do (5,3,6)
15. Freely donate 150, being full of stories (9)
16. Performers set on part of audience like a dog (8)
18. Hers can become involved in farms (7)
19. The linguist has an unusual bias in his skill (7)
20. Tangles and makes a surly noise (6)
22. Property which brings gold to someone (5)

SETSQUARE

**Solution to 1531**



**Prizewinner to 1531**

P. Baldwin
(Chorley, Lancs.)



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wine bars in Vauxhall and wealthy people are not buying up the council estates and stripping the walls down to their post-war splendour.

For a squatter like myself there are the underrated (and generally undiscovered) pleasures of the many notable derelict buildings which Vauxhall boasts. In days gone by we had the empty Marmite Factory to frolic in. The factory ceased to function long ago and all that remained of the Marmite was a faint yeasty smell and several huge holes on the first floor that must have once housed brewing vats for that dark and sticky substance. Since its productive days the factory had been used as a storage space for furniture and in amongst the beds and desks was a collection of large papier-maché figures. Tweedledum and Tweedledee sat silently watching us spirit furniture away. We pilfered that factory for almost two years before the supply got down to the truly tacky and useless. Now the Marmite Factory is being done up into warehouse space but there is still the monolithic Cold Storage building and numerous other empty warehouses and factories for residents of Vauxhall to play in.

Of course, Vauxhall is not all fun and games. The traffic passing through is heavy and smelly and the estates are decrepit. There is an enormously high population of permanently homeless men who lie in the parks and on the pavements. And yet, it is easy to get down onto the Thames near Vauxhall Bridge and there is nothing quite like mucking about on the river when the moon is out and London is sleeping.

Now I have left all that behind me and am a resident of Bloomsbury. The house we have squatted is palatial: two of its three bedrooms have heated towel racks that work; it is fully carpeted and has a garden; and the original 1690 wooden walls have been nicely stripped by some discriminating previous occupant, whose name we know to have been Rupert. The lights are on dimmer switches and there is an intercom to the street through which we can abuse passers-by. And, of course, there is the British Museum down the end of one street, Charles Dickens' House down the end of another and, happily, the Alien's Registration Office down the next for those not infrequent days when I feel a little foreign.

From a semi-derelict flat with one hot water tap that I put in myself, and not very well at that, to all of this, within walking distance of Soho, and which do I prefer? Vauxhall, of course. Is this hankering after home south of the river an emotion born of habit, some kind of reaction against change, or do the mysteries and challenges of Vauxhall outweigh the charms and conveniences of Bloomsbury? My move up-market, as rapid and stomach-turning as the lift in the Empire State Building, has left me feeling dizzy and rather out of place. □

*Kate Pullinger was this year's winner of the* City Limits *short story competition.*

# Weekend competition

**No 2943** **Set by Ms de Meaner**

You've done remarkably little to deserve it, but a generous soul at Viking, the publishers, has made us a most handsome offer: some free copies of *The Penguin Dictionary of Modern Humorous Quotations* (hardback) published this very week. The book is a short cut for raconteurs (from after-dinner speakers to the sort of people beside whom one always finds oneself on flights across the Atlantic), with *bons mots* from such as Wilde, Bierce, Parker, Beachcomber, Lebowitz, on subjects from Abstinence ('I distrust camels, and anyone else who can go a week without a drink': Joe E. Lewis) to Youth and Yugoslavia. Perversely, in order to win a copy, you must prove that you have no need of one, by coining your own *bons mots*/epigrams on any of the following subjects: Journalism, Sport, Left Politics, Sex, Children, Contemporary Art. Max. five examples of witty succinctness by Thursday 9 October.

**No 2940** **Set by Ben Trovato**

Promotional material to make Sellafield Britain's No. 1 tourist spot.

**Report** **By Rosie Hughes**

I'm sure what it is, my lambkins, is that you're all going down with the flue: ten great bagfuls of entries and most of them wouldn't even have got you a job writing *memos* at Young & Rubicam. Still, take a good, stiff whiskey with honey and I'm sure you'll be bouncing again next week. Ten pounds each to the few, below, with a possible future in advertising. (That is — oh dear! — if Sellafield allows us a future in anything).

Sellafield Theme Park — the healthiest day out for the nuclear family!

With the health and safety of visitors our prime concern, Sellafield was built on the bleak, wind-swept Cumbrian coast to minimise the dangers of developing skin cancer from over-exposure to strong sunlight. Our record speaks for itself — during the summer of 1986 not one single case of even mild sunburn was reported at Sellafield.

In addition, most of our displays and exhibitions are housed beneath several feet of reinforced concrete to protect you from the vile effects of acid rain caused by the irresponsible burning of fossil fuels.

Eating at our fast reactor food bar (Beefburgers done to a turn in under a millisecond — so no queueing) brings peace of mind knowing that you will avoid tummy upsets from incomplete thawing or undercooking.

Remember — compared with Sellafield, an intensive care unit it positively dangerous.

V. ERNEST COX

Hit the headlines! Get *your* name on the front page!

Yes, it's true! If you're top of *our* radiation charts you could be front-page news. Even if you miss a top prize, there's still fun for all the family ticking away at Sellafield. Test your strength — by taking a hammer to a waste container (watch it crack!); guess the number of becquerels in a jar; try our impromptu barbecue at the nearest available hot-spot — Hot Dogs a speciality. And there's our treasure-hunt-with-a-difference — guess where Lily Leak will appear next and we'll let *you* leak it to the Press. Our Zoo and Aquarium, stocked with novelties, will *really* test your knowledge of the animal world.

Try Sellafield, where the welcome's warm and people count.

Come, radiate a little!

D. A. PRINCE

Tanned at Torquay?
Basted at Blackpool?
For the ultimate experience
Why not sizzle at Sellafield?!

TONY MEREDITH

Anticipating an upsurge in public interest, Sellafield now offers the following delights: afternoon tea at ye Olde Falle Oute Sheltere; a pre-lunch drink at our brand-new pub, The King's Heads; a comparative tasting of pre- and post-Chernobyl claret; regular poetry readings from The Waste Land; and the latest in pop music from our own group, Heavy Water.

As you leave, don't forget to buy some memento of your visit from the gift shop: the Mutation Game, Sellafield's answer to Monopoly; melt-down lollipops for the kiddies; a Chernobyl jig-saw — it comes complete: the skill lies in dismantling it; a jar of Three-Mile-Island Salad Dressing; and, for those of a religious persuasion, a four-minute rosary.

WATSON WEEKS

*TV/Cinema Ad*

Violins playing soft music, people getting ready for work and school, one woman on her own looking at photo of husband.

Cut to husband sitting on a plane.

Outside shot of Aero Mexico plane, music intensifies as shot pans out to reveal a light aircraft heading straight for the plane. They collide.

Cut to view of the pilot as the plane heads downwards towards Sellafield. People at work, children in the playground look skyward, people touring Sellafield looking terrified. Flashes of things associated with death (cemeteries, battlefields, Dr Owen). Plane about to hit Sellafield, freeze the action, cut the music.

Voiceover: 'Are you worried by the nonsense talked bout Sellafield? Don't believe the sceptics — this could never happen here. Aero Mexico does not fly to the UK.' Plane disappears, life continues as normal, thousands of tourists flock to Sellafield's gates. Caption 'Sunny Sellafield — Safer than the San Andreas fault.'

MARTIN POWELL

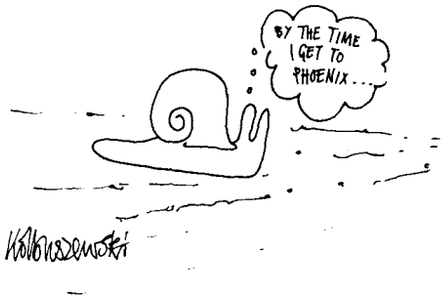
*A campaign of small ads in carefully selected publications*

Do you want to escape from the dull round of heredity and of children who do no more that simply replicate their boring old grandparents? Visit Sellafield and see what a difference it can make!

Are you troubled by uncertainty about your death? Do you wonder how you will die — in a road accident, of a coronary, in bed!? Come to Sellafield and be sure.

Aspiring journalists looking for a story should make a visit to Sellafield soon. There's always something new to find and to write about; and your story is bound to find a market!

JOHN STANLEY



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RIGHT, SIT DOWN LIBERALS, AND LISTEN CAREFULLY
CLAP CLAP
NOW, DISARMAMENT. I WANT TO MAKE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT WHEN I AM PRIME MINISTER I EXPECT TO ATTEND TOP-LEVEL DISARMAMENT CONFERENCES WITH OTHER IMPORTANT WORLD LEADERS
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
THE DISARMAMENT PROCESS IS ENORMOUSLY COMPLICATED, REQUIRING LEVELS OF SKILL AND POLITICAL JUDGEMENT THAT ARE QUITE BEYOND YOUR IMAGINATION
AND IF I JOINED THE PROCESS HAVING TO ADMIT WE'D ALREADY DISARMED— THEY WOULDN'T LET ME PLAY, WOULD THEY?

# Chess

THE SAVAGE attack that won game 16 of the K v K match for Kasparov would be a fittingly symbolic end to the Karpov era. Karpov had persuaded almost everybody that the most effective style was the grind and squeeze method. Success could only be achieved by those who purged themselves of fantasy and over-ambition. Yet now the great champion of realism is overwhelmed by extravagantly imaginative sacrificial play. The *soundness* of Kasparov's conception is certainly disputable. So I will hold over analysis of this remarkable game until next week, in the hope that by then we will have sorted out what should and should not have been played.

This also gives me a chance to catch up on some recent publications — all from the same publishing house. To begin with the openings books, there are three additions to the Batsford Gambit Series, all priced at £5.95. Starting with the one I like least, *Spanish Gambits* by Leonid Shamkovich and Eric Schiller is a rather haphazard survey of various sharp lines in the Ruy Lopez. Containing barely 80 pages of genuine text, it seems poor value for the price, particularly as the authors have chosen to deal with such a large number of variations that nothing is done properly. There are far too many lines which end in vague and unsubstantiated assessments. *Queen's Gambit Accepted*, by Eduard Gufeld (translated from a Russian manuscript by Eric Schiller), offers 40 pages more and they are decidedly more coherent and informative pages too. Anyone preparing to defend against 1. d4 with 1 . . . d5 2. c4 dxc4 will find this a useful guide. Gufeld the player, however, so far from being a devotee of the **QGA**, has conducted a long and passionate love-affair with the King's Indian, and I think this shows in a certain lack of stamina in the way Gufeld the author treats some critical positions.

I have no such reservations about *Budapest Gambit* by Otto Borik, which Les Blackstock has translated and updated from a 1985 German edition. Borik immediately won my admiration by the modesty of his foreword. He frankly admits that if the reader takes up the Budapest and meets a well-informed opponent, 'then one must put up with a slight but defendable disadvantage; one also has to do that in many other openings with Black'. He succeeds so well in showing how this despised and unfashionable opening should be handled, that by the end of the book you may wonder whether Black need fear even a defendable disadvantage. Nor does he allow tactics to swamp strategy: the Budapest is shaped into a playable system by means of well-founded positional ideas that are carefully explained. At least that goes for the Budapest itself (1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e5 3. dxe5 Ng4). Its near relative the Fajarowicz Gambit (with 3 . . .Ne4!?) is altogether a more dodgy business. One of the illustrative games in this section is really spectacular:

**Kottnauer-Martin, Czechoslovakia v France 1946. 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e5 3. dxe5 Ne4 4. Qc2 d5** Black would be well advised to try 4 . . . Bb4+ 5. Nc3 d5 6. exd6 Bf5 instead. **5. exd6 Bf5 6. Nc3! Nxd6 7. e4 Nxe4** White can grab a piece here with 8. Nxe4, but after 8 . . . Bb4+ 9. Ke2 Nc6 10. Be3 0-0-0 Black gets a very strong attack. So a less materialistic choice is to be preferred. **8. Bd3! Nxf2 9. Bxf5 Nxh1 10. Nf3 Bc5** Borik suggests 10 . . . g6 as a possible improvement here, but I doubt whether Black can survive long after 11. Nd5!, followed by Bg5 or Bf4. **11. Ne4 Qe7 12. Bg5 f6 13. 0-0-0 Na6** Against 13 . . . fxg5 White has 14. Nxc5 Qxc5 15. Qe4+ Qe7 16. Qxb7. **14. Rd7 Qxd7** Black gives up his Queen because after 14 . . . Qf8 15. Qe2 Be7 16. Ne5!! he has no acceptable defence against the threat of Qh5+. **15. Bxd7+ Kxd7 16. Nxc5+ Nxc5 17. Qf5+ Ne6 18. Nd4 Rae8 19. Qd5+ Kc8 20. Nxe6 fxg5 21. Nc5! Re1+ 22. Kd2 Rhe8 23. Qxb7+ Kd8 24. Qb8+ Ke7 25. Qxe8+ 1-0**. After 25 . . . Kxe8 26. Kxe1 g4 27. g3 the White King shuffles across to the Nh1.

Another series, Batsford Chess Classics, has been augmented by two volumes, Nimzowitsch's *Chess Praxis* and Staunton's *The Chess Tournament - London 1851* (£14.95 each). All that need be said about *Chess Praxis* is that it is still the best book on chess ever written. However, it isn't as funny as Staunton's book. I know I should view this with due seriousness as an historic document, record of the first ever international tournament, and all that. But it is just too hilarious. The tournament was run as a series of rounds of knockout matches with a random draw and no thought of seeding, and so of course some of the strongest players went out too early. There were no clocks, which allowed Elijah Williams, the grandaddy of *sitzfleisch*, to bore his opponents silly through spending hours over every move, no matter how obvious. And Staunton, unable to conceal his pique at losing to Anderssen in the semi-finals, has no fair words for anyone and an inexhaustible stock of excuses for himself.

**George Botterill**

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# This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed
(Or postcards please)

☐ The Scottish National Party chairman told the annual conference at Dunoon, yesterday: 'When England play the West Indies at cricket, we support the West Indies. When England play New Zealand at rugby, we support New Zealand. When England play anyone at football, we support the police.' — *Greenock Telegraph*
(A. A. Rae)

☐ Opening the seminar programme, Mr Gummer began by saying that the most important gift God had given mankind was the ability to choose between heaven and hell. Developing this theme of choice he explained that for him it was the key to understanding the free enterprise system. — *Church of England News* (Leonard Cox)

☐ Few baronets can have lovingly stitched the name 'Mao Tse Tung' in Chinese on a mat with which to adorn the family home, as has Sir David Erskine. This does not mean that the Vice-Lord Lieutenant of Fife nurses a secret admiration for the dead communist leader, but it does show his affection for his wife's Pekinese of that name. — *East Fife Mail*
(Mary Manners Simpson)



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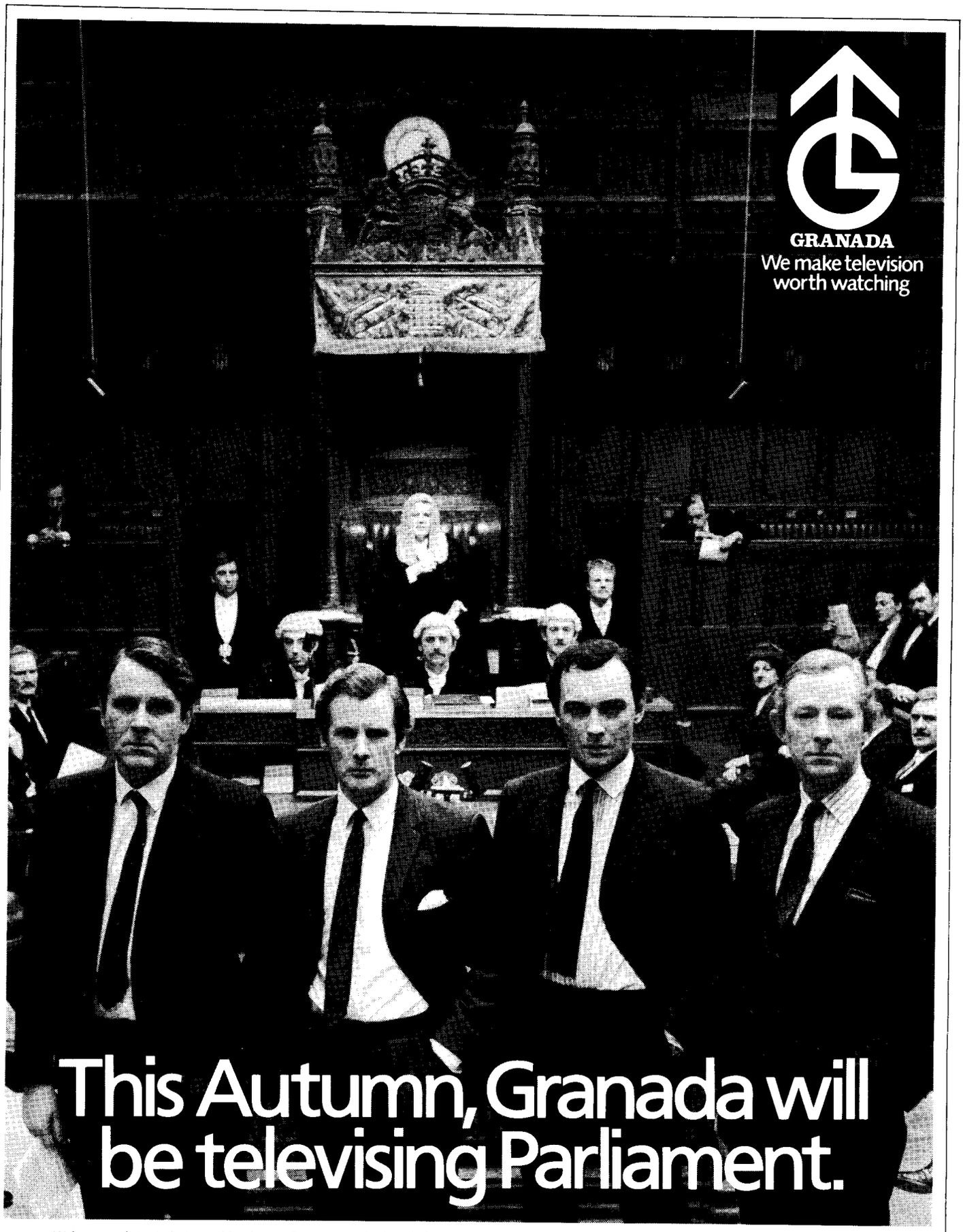


We've moved Westminster to Manchester. Barely a hundred yards from Coronation Street, and just up from Sherlock Holmes' Baker Street, we've constructed a replica of the House of Commons including the Chamber and Members' Lobby. It is the set for our 10 part adaptation of Jeffrey Archer's best selling political blockbuster "First Among Equals", and heralds another major addition to the long list of top quality drama made here in the North West by Granada TV. "First Among Equals" vividly portrays the political careers and private lives of four politicians – two Conservative, two Labour – from 1966 to 1991, and their struggles to become the next British Prime Minister. Starting Tuesday Sept. 30th at 9pm you can follow their fortunes and find out who wins.

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